



# THE INDEPENDENT

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WEATHER: Warm and wet

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40-PAGE SUPPLEMENT INSIDE THE TABLOID

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IN THE TABLOID

**JONATHAN MILLER**  
**THE MOMENT THAT**  
**CHANGED MY LIFE**

SPORT PAGE 18

**Independent**  
**Fantasy Football**  
WIN A TRIP TO THE  
1998 WORLD CUP FINAL

Young Tory, not so fogey, samples the damp delights of carnival



Tory leader William Hague and his fiancée Pfiou Jenkins drink coconut milk during their visit to the Notting Hill carnival

Photograph: Kieran Doherty

Ian Burrell

Rain dampened the start of the Notting Hill Carnival where William Hague, the Tory leader, and his fiancée, Pfiou Jenkins, joined the crowds yesterday and washed out many people's

Bank Holiday Mood. Mr Hague, who is said to be trying to throw off his "old fogey" image, said, "This is the biggest cultural event of the nation." But storms created chaos on the roads for thousands of motorists who were only too well

aware of the other vehicles around them as flooding contributed to jams on many of the roads to the coast. Surface water in the West Country created hazardous conditions while fog and mist across Lincolnshire led to reduced visibility.

A severe weather warning was issued for East Anglia where half a month's rainfall fell in six hours, flooding several roads in the area. The RAC reported flooding in Wiltshire with the A354 in Newtown, the A3102 in West-

brook and the B3803 in Berwick St James the worst affected. Water on the M25 near Denham was three to four inches deep while the M40 between Bicester and Banbury and junctions 1A of the M40 also saw delays because of flooding.

## Shooters to sue over gun ban

Fran Abrams  
Political Correspondent

The firearms lobby will today launch legal action against the Government, claiming compensation, which could run into hundreds of millions of pounds, for the ban on the ownership of handguns.

Although the group is not challenging the legality of the ban, it is asking the European Commission on Human Rights to judge whether the compensation package offered by the Government is adequate.

A legal team, representing all sectors of the firearms industry, will lodge the application today, claiming compensation for loss of business and amenities.

The move does not attempt to challenge the Firearms Act, which was enacted after the Dunblane school massacre in March last year, when 16 children and their teacher were killed. However, the group has described the Government's compensation package, passed by Parliament in June this year, as "woefully inadequate and lacking in consistency".

Six applications will be lodged by The Firearms Industry Compensation Group, and will come from an unnamed individual shooter, two wholesalers, two gun clubs and a manufacturer.

Michael Whitton, of Edwin Cox, the firm of solicitors acting for the group, said that if the action was successful, it would clear the way for "hundreds, possibly thousands" of compensation claims.

Although the prohibition itself was not being challenged, a fair balance must be struck

between the public interest in a ban and the protection of the fundamental rights of individuals and businesses, he said. There were no domestic remedies available, he added.

"If the Government chooses to deprive an entire industry of its property - namely its ability to trade and the fruits of that trade - and individuals of the right to enjoy a leisure activity, it should provide proper compensation. In respect of economic interests and loss of amenity, it has provided absolutely nothing," said Mr Whitton.

He said the Commission was expected to take about 18 months to consider the claims. Its options included rejecting the applications or passing them to the European Court of Human Rights, which would take up to five years to hear the case.

The claims are based on Article 1 of the First Protocol of the European Convention of Human Rights. The lobby claims the compensation scheme devised by the Government did not take into account the loss of business, assets, trading income, other economic interests or the loss of amenities for individual shooters.

The gun lobby has claimed that the 1997 amendments to the Firearms Act will not have an effect on gun-related crime.

It has pointed to the example of murderers and robbers who were rarely registered with gun clubs, claiming that sportsmen would suffer because of the legislation.

A £150m compensation package for gun owners was approved by Parliament in June ahead of the ban on larger cal-

ibre handguns which came into force on 1 July. The Government said at the time that claims could be processed within 18 months from 1 July.

Last night, a Home Office spokesman said that in the light of the Dunblane tragedy it was clear that only the strictest firearms laws could provide proper public safety.

"The Government has an overwhelming mandate for gun control. The compensation package for gun owners was approved by Parliament on 9 June, 1997, and obviously it entails a careful balancing act in paying compensation to those affected and controlling public expenditure," he said.

A leading anti-gun campaigner, Ann Pearson, last night said that if the case succeeded it would amount to the writing of a blank cheque from taxpayers. Companies were not normally compensated for the commercial impact of legislative changes and they should not be in this case, she said.

"When the health and safety regulations are changed, there are costs to businesses and the Government isn't obliged to compensate, because it is about public safety. This is about public safety. They are being compensated for their assets, but to compensate them for this would write an open cheque. Why should they set such a precedent?" she asked.

The Tory Government had tried to introduce less stringent legislation, but it ran into trouble because of a rebellion by its own pro-gun MPs. When Labour came to power it promised, and passed, a total ban.

## 'Guardian' journalist helped Ghanaian pursue libel action

Steve Boggan

A senior *Guardian* executive wrote the cheques which paid for a libel action against *The Independent* brought by the former head of security for an African military regime, it was confirmed yesterday. More than £300,000 was paid into Victoria Brittain's bank account, allegedly from Ghanaian and Libyan sources, to fund the lawsuit, which *The Independent* has been fighting for four years.

Ms Brittain, the *Guardian's* deputy foreign editor, used the money to pay the legal bills for Kajo Tsikata, the former head of internal security in Ghana, one of her closest friends for almost 20 years. She suggested Mr Tsikata should sue *The Independent* - and introduced him to Bindman & Partners libel lawyers - following the publication of an article which referred to the murder of three Ghanaian high court judges in 1982.

When legal bills were presented, sources say, she wrote personal cheques to cover them. What she did not know, however, was that her bank details had been secretly given to a Libyan contact. She believed all the money arriving in her account was from Mr Tsikata but most of it is reported to have originated from Libya. The *Guardian* said she would not be disciplined for her role.

Ms Brittain's involvement in the lawsuit was revealed two days ago when David Shayler, a former MI5 officer, told the *Mail on Sunday* that the payments into her bank account had triggered a surveillance and bugging operation in 1994 because intelligence operatives wrongly believed it was part of a Libyan money-laundering operation. When they realised the operation was simply intended to bankroll a legal action, the surveillance was halted.

In a statement from Bindman & Partners issued on Sunday, Ms Brittain said she never knowingly received any money from Libyan sources. A

former MI5 officer, told the *Mail on Sunday* that the payments into her bank account had triggered a surveillance and bugging operation in 1994 because intelligence operatives wrongly believed it was part of a Libyan money-laundering operation. When they realised the operation was simply intended to bankroll a legal action, the surveillance was halted.

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*Guardian* spokeswoman confirmed last night that Ms Brittain's bank statements did not identify the source of payments into her account. She said it was not in dispute, however, that money had been paid into and out of her account to fund the libel action.

Had her bank statements been more comprehensive, Mr Shayler told *The Independent* yesterday, they would have shown that five of seven payments from September 1993 to February 1995 had Libyan connections. They comprise three transfers

of £34,890 each from the Libyan Interest Section account at the Libyan Arab Foreign Bank on 15 December 1994, 1 January 1995 and 2 February 1995; and two more - one for £50,000 and another for £50,000 - are understood to originate from two Credit Lyonnais accounts held by Khalifa Ahmed Bazelya, the former head of the Libyan interest section at the Saudi Arabian embassy in London.

Other payments which did not appear to originate from Mr Tsikata include one for £48,989 from Kajo Amoo-Gottfried, the former Ghanaian ambassador to Peking, in November 1994, and £10,000 from a Yousif Ibrahim in December 1994.

She has satisfied Alan Rusbridger, her editor, that she was acting "innocently" in a personal capacity and so will not face disciplinary action. She has allowed Mr Tsikata to pay sums of money into her account for many years. It is understood he had a child at public school in England and did not want to pay fees directly to the school.

The use of her account for the legal action is being seen at the *Guardian* as an extension of that arrangement. A spokeswoman at the newspaper refused to comment on the appropriateness of one of its senior executives becoming involved in a libel action against another publication.

Mr Tsikata sued the publishers of *The Independent* after a report in 1992 about a public inquiry into the execution of the judges. The Court of Appeal upheld *The Independent's* argument that a fair and accurate report of the inquiry's proceedings was covered by qualified privilege. Last month, Mr Tsikata was refused leave to appeal against this decision at the House of Lords. His solicitors intend to proceed to trial with the argument that *The Independent's* publication of the report was "malicious".

Ms Brittain is seeking legal advice over the possibility of suing MI5.

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### QUICKLY

#### Montserrat in crisis

A new steering committee was set up to oversee the crisis in Montserrat last night amid deepening anger over the handling of the affair. Page 6

#### Berlin Wall sentence

Eggo Krenz, East Germany's last headline communist leader, was whisked off to jail yesterday after being sentenced to six and a half years for the deaths of refugees trying to escape over the Berlin Wall. Page 10

#### Pizza gale

Supermarket pizzas have turned into Britain's convenience food of choice: in the past five years sales have doubled to turn them into a £241m-a-year business. Page 3

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## The poem that stops Chris Smith's clock

Rob Brown

Chris Smith, Britain's first openly gay Cabinet minister, reaffirmed his determination to remain up front about his sexuality yesterday when he revealed his favourite screen moments at the Edinburgh International Television Festival.

If he were to be cast adrift on a desert island with only one thing to watch, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport would choose the scene in *Four Weddings and a Funeral* where the actor John Hannah publicly mourns his male lover

with an emotional recital of W H Auden's "Stop All The Clocks".

"This is the bit that always moves me when I see it," Mr Smith told an audience of television executives gathered in the General Assembly Hall of the Church of Scotland, an institution which has never celebrated sexuality of any sort, least of all homosexuality.

The minister also voiced regrets about allowing a newspaper recently to probe him about his personal life. He described the interview in the *Sunday Times* as his "most un-

comfortable experience" with the press since taking office in May.

Simon Sebag-Montefiore had "come along and asked me the most personal of questions, which I think he wouldn't have dreamed of asking any other member of the Cabinet." (Mr Smith was asked to name which of his Cabinet colleagues he most fancied.)

Reflecting on the experience yesterday, he said he had contemplated stopping the interview, adding: "I think I hindsight I should have."

nothing against robust political interviews when he picked Jeremy Paxma's relentless inquisition of former Home Secretary Michael Howard as one of his all-time television favourites. But he said the most powerful interview he had seen in recent years was Melvyn Bragg with Dennis Potter shortly before the controversial television playwright died from cancer.

Mr Smith also paid tribute to ITN's coverage of John Smith's death. A keen hill climber - he used to bag Munros with the late Labour leader - Mr Smith

lauded a BBC documentary series about mountaineering, entitled *The Edge*.

He reiterated his commitment to keep the "crown jewels" of British sport on conventional free-to-air television by selecting a clip from the England v Germany penalty shoot-out in Euro 96.

The man in charge of reviving the British film industry also revealed that he is engaged in talks with the Motion Picture Association of America aimed at ensuring that British cinema-goers get the chance to view more British films.

هكذا من الاصل



## significant shorts

## Air-filled waders keep fisherman afloat 19 hours

A man whose boat overturned during a fishing trip was rescued after spending more than 19 hours in the water - using his air-filled waders to help him float. But his son, who was with him on the boat, was yesterday still missing.

John Brodie, 43, of Rossendale, Lancashire, was picked up by the Royal Air Force Valley rescue helicopter one and a half miles off Llandudno, North Wales, after being spotted by a member of the public who notified the coastguard at Holyhead and Llandudno. Mr Brodie, who was fishing with his son, Charles, 23, said their cabin cruiser, *Chae's Dream*, overturned on Sunday afternoon. He had spent more than 19 hours in the water.

Rescue teams were last night intensifying the search for his son, concentrating on the area off Little Orme's Head, up to five and a half miles offshore and up to the coastline. Jim Peaton, District Controller at Holyhead Coastguard, said: "We are delighted to have found the father. He is a remarkably lucky man. The search will now continue for his son."

## Thomas, 12, may have known killer

Detectives were yesterday investigating the possibility that schoolboy Thomas Marshall may have known his killer. Police said they were following "genuine lines of inquiry" and thought the key to the case might lie in or near Thomas's home village of Happisburgh, Norfolk. But a spokesman stressed that police were keeping an open mind about the killing - including the possibility that Thomas, 12, may have been abducted by a paedophile.

Thomas disappeared from his home at around 6pm on Thursday. His body was discovered 50 miles away in a picnic area off the A11 near Thetford a day later. He had been strangled. His mountain bike was found lying by a road at East Ruston, about four miles from his home. Thomas had told his parents, John and Carol, that he was going to visit a friend in Eccles. But they were told that he had never arrived. Detective Superintendent Les Purrett, who is leading the investigation, said officers were trying to locate as many of Thomas's friends and associates as possible. They were also considering the possibility that the killer had dumped Thomas's bike and taken his body to Thetford to lay a false trail.

## Jackson's charity under scrutiny



Heal the World, the charity set up by superstar Michael Jackson (left), was under scrutiny yesterday after the Charity Commission found a "significant" amount of its United Kingdom income went on administration. The singer's international charity was set up in 1992 in a with the aim of raising £60m in a year. In June this year Channel 5's *What's The Story* programme revealed that the charity had not made a single charitable donation in

the past three years. Richard Fowler, president of Heal the World International, said then that the UK charity had been made semi-dormant to cut costs, but would soon be revived.

A Charity Commission spokeswoman confirmed that the accounts of the organisation had been studied and that contact would be made with Heal the World. "Some charities do have high start-up costs through the nature of what they do and obviously we have to make sure we have to make sure that money is being spent on the purpose that the charity was set up for," she said.

## Wedding guests in E.coli outbreak

Health officials tackling an outbreak of *E. coli* food poisoning were yesterday trying to track down hundreds of guests at a wedding reception after discovering that many of them work in the catering industry. Birmingham's director of environmental services, Ian Coghill, said: "We know at least 30 of the guests at the wedding work in the food industry and we are worried about the potential for the infection to be spread to others."

The source of the outbreak has been traced to a lamb dish served at the reception held at Swanworth Girls School in the city earlier this month. Mr Coghill said that 600 people had been contacted since the outbreak began, but more than 1,400 are believed to have attended the wedding. Two of seven children affected by the potentially fatal bug after the wedding reception remain "stable" in Birmingham's Children's Hospital. The others have been released.

## Over-60s stay with private health

The abolition of tax relief on private health insurance for the over-sixties has not led to the mass exodus insurers predicted. Government sources said yesterday. Reports yesterday estimated as many as 100,000 people had given up their private medical cover since the Chancellor Gordon Brown announced the cuts in the July Budget. However, a Health Department spokesperson dismissed the figure as "fantasy".

The relief, granted at 23 per cent of the basic rate of tax, had cost the Treasury £140m a year, according to Mr Brown. The Conservatives claimed this saving would be wiped out as more elderly people gave up their premiums and opted to use the NHS. But the spokesperson said that the Chancellor would be pouring £1.2bn into the NHS over the coming year, adding that the Government had no indication that waiting lists had been affected by the Chancellor's move. A spokesperson for BUPA, the biggest health insurance company, commented that not as many patients as projected were dropping their cover. A spokesperson for PPP Healthcare said that one in two people were expressing concern at the rise in premiums, but an exact figure had not been established at how many would give up.

Philip McNamara

## Correction

The article headlined "Right, you lovely little man" in yesterday's *Independent* gave the impression the first incident described took place during the parachute selection course. The incident described actually occurred during a final exercise at Sandhurst. Dr Bellamy never trained with the Parachute Regiment.

## people



Admission of guilt: Suzanne Warburton and Paul Shearsmith (Photograph: Reuters)

## Woman walks free after making false rape claim

A British mother-of-four escaped being jailed in Cyprus yesterday when a judge fined her £400 for falsely claiming that she had been raped. Suzanne Warburton, 30, and her boyfriend, Paul Shearsmith, 26, who was fined the same amount, had been wanted by the British High Commission in Cyprus that they could expect jail sentences.

The same judge, Michalis Christodoulou, then fined three other British tourists almost the same total amount for falsely reporting that they had lost a watch.

Outside the court, Ms Warburton showed no signs of stress and smiled and joked with her boyfriend as they waited to pay the fines. "It's a great relief to be going home," she said.

Only two weeks ago, the same district court at Larnaca sentenced a 22-year-old Irish woman, Annette Mangan, to four months in Nicosia central prison for making similar false charges of rape.

Judge Christodoulou told the couple, from Stockport, Greater Manchester, that their fabricated claim was a serious offence and that an innocent man had his name smeared so they could try to claim insurance money.

The judge said there was a need for deterrent sentences in such cases, but added that he was taking into account their clean record and that their admission of lying to police had prevented an innocent man from being arrested.

Last Thursday, Warburton and her boyfriend went to police claiming she had been raped by the son of the hotel owner where they were staying just outside Ayia Napa.

Police became suspicious because the couple had taken so long to file the complaint, and had only done so just a few hours before their plane was due to leave Cyprus.

Yesterday, Judge Christodoulou said that bogus insurance claims by tourists on the island were out of control, with police receiving between 30 and 40 false claims per day.

Civil engineer Chris Barker, 30, from Sutton, Surrey, his girlfriend, Kirsty Sales, 24, a secretary from Wallington, Surrey, and their friend Margaret Fernandez, 30, from Middlesex, were fined £250 each for trying to claim insurance money for a stolen watch worth £100.

Barker said Miss Sales had retracted her verbal complaint five minutes after making it to police, but was forced to make a written statement. He claimed police were hostile, banging desks and chairs, and saying she would go to prison if they didn't confess to the false claim.

"It was a silly thing to do and petty, but you hear all the time that people get away with this. We were treated as if we'd killed someone," he said.

Ian Burrell

## Lisa Potts makes her debut on the airwaves

Lisa Potts, the former nursery nurse who became a national heroine when she saved primary school pupils from a mad axe attacker, made her debut as a radio presenter yesterday.

The 22-year-old (right) hosted the two-hour mid-morning show on WABC Classic Gold, a local station based in her home town, Wolverhampton.

After the show, the station, which broadcasts across Shropshire and the Black Country, said it had been flooded with calls supporting Miss Potts, who was awarded the George Medal earlier this year for her bravery.

Mike Wyre, who works as a DJ for the station and helped show Miss Potts how to operate studio equipment, said: "She did very well indeed. She's got a natural bubblyness and enthusiasm. We've had lots and lots of phone calls from the public praising Lisa - she's had a really warm response."

Miss Potts, who clearly enjoyed the first of her scheduled four days at WABC, ended her first stint at the microphone by thanking the hundreds of listeners she chatted to off-air, as hits from the 50s to the early 80s were played.

WABC's afternoon show presenter, Mike Baker, said: "She thoroughly enjoyed it and she's



looking forward to the challenge of tomorrow. She got hundreds of calls wishing her good luck and a few proposals of marriage.

"She was obviously a little nervous at the beginning, but she was relaxed by the end and she made a good start."

In July last year, Miss Potts tackled Horrett Campbell, when he entered the playground of St Luke's Primary School in Wolverhampton and slashed at children enjoying a teddy bears' picnic.

The former nursery assistant sustained injuries to her head, arms and back as she tried to shield children from 33-year-old Campbell, who was later ordered to be detained in a mental hospital.

## Labour demands explanation from bank chief

Labour last night demanded an explanation from the governor of the Bank of Scotland, Sir Bruce Paull, after anti-devolution campaigners claimed him as one of their supporters.

Last week, Sir Bruce publicly criticised plans to give the Scottish Parliament tax-raising powers. Yesterday the Think Twice campaign listed him, along with Sir Donald Mackay, the former chairman of Scottish Enterprise, as a "known sceptic" on devolution.

A Labour Party spokesman said that Sir Bruce must "make his position clear".

"He must make clear whether or not he is in the ranks of Think Twice - or is he prepared to come out openly and say is very angry that the Think Twice campaign has tried to hijack him?" the spokesman asked.

Sir Bruce could only continue to speak on behalf of his bank and other businesses if he did so as an independent figure, he said.

Sir Bruce was not available for immediate comment yesterday, but Brian Monteith, co-ordinator of the Think Twice campaign, said the list had been issued purely as a guide that journalists might find useful. "He has nothing to do with us," he said. "All we are doing is providing a list of names."

Fran Abrams

## briefing

## SOCIETY

## The 1990s - a decade of poverty and upheaval

Memories of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s are dominated by music and fashion, but the 1990s are summed up by unemployment and moral decline, a report claims today. The present decade is seen as the dreariest in living memory, characterised by lack of money, fear of job losses and the disintegration of the social fabric.

In contrast, people remember earlier decades as an exciting time of innovative music, hippies, free love, space exploration, mini skirts and flared trousers.

Impressions of the 1980s include the "loadsomoney" economic boom and the political dominance of Margaret Thatcher, with fashion and music still high up on the list, according to the survey of 2,000 adults, by global investment managers Templeton.

A Templeton spokesman, Ken Nicholson, said it may be that bad memories faded with time, so the 90s would ultimately be remembered for more positive reasons. "Clearly it's the sounds and the visual images that dominate over time."

"The big question is, in 20 years, will we have forgotten the rise of the Internet, John Major, unemployment and the recession and simply remember Brit Pop and the Spice Girls?"

The findings emerged from a guide which the company compiled to track whether world events such as wars and the moon landing had any effect on the financial performance of investments.

"The conclusion was they didn't," said Mr Nicholson. "Just as the global events of the past 40 years have faded in people's memories, they have also had little lasting impact on long-term investment values."

## ENVIRONMENT

## Climate change threatens bears

Thousands of polar bear cubs could be killed by a dramatic temperature rise in the Arctic, which is melting their dens and destroying their food, environmentalists warn today.

A North Pole expedition by environmentalist group Greenpeace revealed an "alarming" rate of global warming which could threaten the existence of the polar bear and other unique Arctic wildlife.

Expedition leader Steve Sawyer told PA News from the group's boat on the Arctic Ocean: "There is so little ice here we cannot tell the difference between the ocean and the North Sea. It is very alarming."

"The early Spring thaw has meant polar bear dens have collapsed, potentially smothering cubs or exposing them to harsh Arctic weather too soon. The reduction in ice affects the entire ecosystem, from seals to fish, which is the bears' food."

Dr Vera Alexander, an expert on ice-edge ecology at the University of Alaska, involved in the expedition, said: "The continued decline of sea ice will affect the production of

algae, which lives beneath the ice and forms the very base of the Arctic food chain.

"Without the algae, there would be no possibility of a food chain as we know it, affecting fish, seals and polar bears."

Greenpeace is calling for a halt to expanding oil industry in the Arctic regions, which it claims is damaging the environment.



## NHS

## Casualty staff at risk of violence

Hospital casualty staff face the threat of violence on a daily basis. A five-hour snapshot of seven of the UK's leading accident and emergency departments carried out for the Press Association, found that verbal and physical abuse of medical staff was widespread. The findings have been given to Frank Dobson, the Secretary of State for Health.

The findings come as Britain's biggest union, Unison, prepares to issue safety guidelines to health workers in a bid to curb the rising tide of workplace violence. New figures, due to be released by the union later this week, show nursing staff and social care workers are most likely to experience violence at work.

Of the 579 new criminal injury compensation claims dealt with by the union over the last six months, 165 were made by nurses following attacks at work and 157 from social care workers. Mr Dobson has promised to take a tough line on patients who abuse A&E staff.

## MOTORING

## Driving a hard bargain

Bargain hunters who spent the bank holiday looking for a used car may well end up disappointed, according to a report. For one in four buyers, their cherished motor is not what they expected, says a survey by Yorkshire Bank.

The holiday weekend is a peak period for second-hand buyers, but too many have their priorities wrong, it adds. Some 56 per cent are influenced by whether the car has good bodywork, as opposed to 21 per cent who put the engine at the top of their checklist.

Only 12 per cent of buyers say they would commission a vehicle inspection report from an independent assessor, and 46 per cent rely on a second opinion from a friend or relative.

Yorkshire Bank spokeswoman Helen Kettleborough, said: "Cars represent a significant spend and so the survey findings are quite alarming. It seems that many buyers make very little attempt to check out the car and its history and as a result, run the risk of ending up with a vehicle which doesn't match their expectations."

One in eight owners give their car a name, according to the bank. The survey showed most cars are "female", with names such as Betsy, Bessie and Lucy topping the list of favourites.

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# Topping the fast food charts

Ham and pineapple pizzas are now the freezer meal of choice for millions

Louise Jury

Frozen supermarket pizzas have turned into Britain's convenience food of choice: in the past five years alone sales have doubled to make the easy television dinner into a £241m-a-year business.

In Italy, they are freshly baked works of culinary art. In Britain, we seem to prefer them cling-wrapped from the freezer. A report published yesterday revealed Britons are eating more than 66,000 tons of frozen pizza a year.

Datamonitor, an industry analyst, said: "Family meals are out, snack culture is in, and pizzas are providing to be a choice of snack or dinner."

Strong advertising, changing lifestyles and innovation had contributed to the giant growth in business, a spokesman from the company said.

San Marco is the most popular brand, followed by McCain, Goodfellas and Chicago Town. But supermarket own brands account for 40 per cent of the market.

At shops in the Asda chain, for instance, they will compile you a customised takeaway pizza while you wait. Pineapple and ham is by far and away the winning combination. Anchovies are largely shunned. The stores try to be flexible. "If someone asked for marshmallows, we'd go and get some from the shop," a spokeswoman said.

She estimated that they sold more than 40 million customised pizzas a year and double that to frozen ones. "They are incredibly popular," she said.

Some ready-made pizzas are very good, according to *The Independent's* food writer Annie Bell. Others are "abominations,



Slice of life: In the last five years, sales of frozen pizzas have doubled to £241m - Britons now eat more than 66,000 tons of them a year

Photograph: John Lawrence

## Created by the Neapolitans and better for you than fish and chips

### How they are made

The Americans like to claim the pizza for their own. But it is with Italy that the dish is most often associated.

Though using bread as a plate has been commonplace for centuries, it seems it was the Neapolitans who topped a disc of bread with cheese and tomato and created the pizza as we know it.

They were assisted by an

abundance of large, sweet, red tomatoes grown from seeds brought from Peru by two Jesuit priests. And though pineapples are a favourite ingredient these days, purists claim the toppings in an authentic pizza stem only from what is available fresh in Italy - such as mozzarella, anchovies and tuna.

A proper Italian pizza has a crust made of flour and yeast with no fat. The dough should be

kneaded by hand or mixers that do not overheat it and punched, again by hand, into a disc no larger than a dinner plate. The base is baked directly on the base of a wood-fired oven heated at temperatures up to 800F. It certainly should not be microwaved.

All ingredients should be fresh and the mozzarella should be worked by hand. Cutting it with a knife may leave a metallic taste.

### How healthy are they?

Food critics may have their culinary objections, but pizza is not necessarily a bad addition to the family diet.

Too much cheese will pile on the calories and the cholesterol. But a topping of vegetables or prawns or tuna would prove a relatively healthy option. Pizza bases contain carbohydrate, but a thin-crust would be acceptable. Deep-pan bases contain more fat. Pizzas fare well compared with kebabs, fish and chips and burgers, all of which are high in fat, salt and sugar content.

pure stodge and very nasty. The main thing is that we still treat pizzas as though the whole point is the topping, whereas the crust is what matters," she said.

The perfect pizza should be baked in a proper wood-fired bread oven or on stones. "It will

have no flavour at all if it's just a manufactured bread base baked in an ordinary oven," Ms Bell said. "A few of the supermarkets are catching on to this. Some are even importing their crusts from Italy now."

Ann Taruschio, who runs the

renowned Walnut Tree Inn restaurant in Abergavenny, Gwent, with her Italian husband Franco, was amazed and saddened that anyone wanted to buy pizza.

"It's just so easy to make," she said. "To make bread is a

very satisfying thing. Then you can put your toppings on - if you have a family, the children can join in which is very pleasurable."

Simon Hopkinson, *The Independent's* Saturday magazine chef and founder of London's

Bibendum restaurant, was also appalled at the thought of so many supermarket pizzas going down. "I think it's laziness, it follows on from the microwave," he said.

"I've had takeaway pizzas - we all have sudden cravings. But

I've never bought a supermarket pizza and I don't think anyone has re-beated me one."

Although people are buying cookery books in their millions (and he is about to add to the pile with one of his own), Mr Hopkinson believes that they could be coffee table accessories. "I don't think people cook from them much. I think we're losing our way deeply in terms of cooking," he said.

Yet he does recognise the value of shop-bought fast food. "I go to Marks and Spencer and buy the chicken tikka masala because it's delicious. I think their prawn cocktail is quite good. I like them because they're well made and I'm sure their pizza is probably quite delicious, too. But it doesn't bear any relationship to the one you eat in a café in Naples."

## Charity to study need for drug law change

A "long overdue" inquiry into the effectiveness of the 1971 Misuse of Drugs Act was announced yesterday by an independent research charity.

The Police Foundation study will be carried out by a committee that will include Simon Jenkins, former editor of the *Times*, and leading lawyers, academics and police officers expert in drugs law.

They are expected to focus on whether the law needs to be changed in the light of a growing drugs culture and the Government's commitment to tackle drug-related crime. Members will take written and oral opinions from experts.

Other charities, including the Prince's Trust, will fund the two-year inquiry.

Barrie Irving, director of the Foundation, said: "Youth culture and the drugs issue have moved on since 1971."

"We realise that this is a sensitive field but independent and objective review is long overdue. Legislation is designed for a particular time and set of problems. Periodic review is essential."

The 12-member committee is expected to look at the original aims of the Act and to decide whether to propose any revisions to the law.

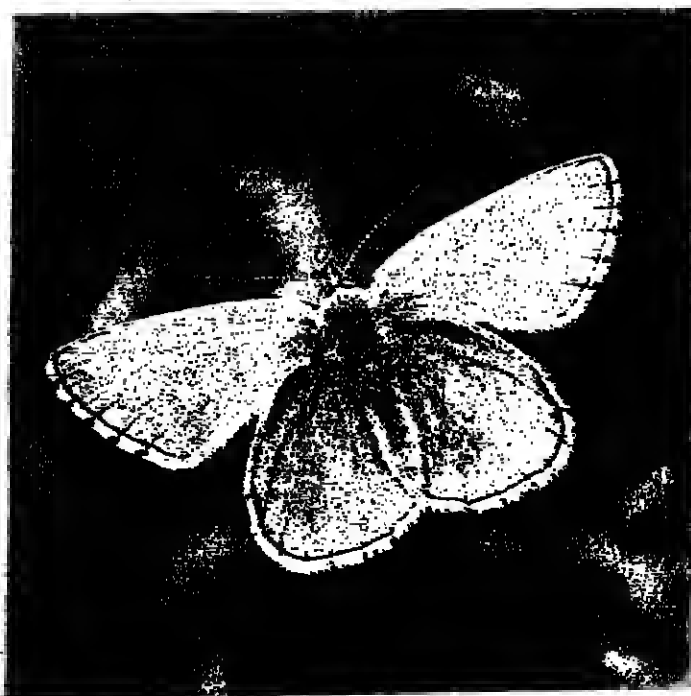
Its chairman, Viscountess Runciman, who also heads the Meatal Health Commission, said the purpose was not to pave the way for the gradual decriminalisation of drugs. "The inquiry is not a lobbying exercise on behalf of any of the positions on this subject," she said.

"It is certainly not a covert attempt to smooth the path to legislation. Neither is it a device designed to bolster a law that may be perceived as failing to best serve those it is meant to assist."

She added: "Clearly there are a range of views on the misuse of drugs and we intend to consult widely with those who have experience in the area."

Viscountess Runciman said that one task would be to examine what decriminalisation and legalisation of drugs would mean.

## Chunnel helps Garden of England blossom again



Thriving: The adonis blue butterfly and late spider orchid



Photographs: Stephen Davis/English Nature

Stephen Goodwin  
Heritage Correspondent

After rearranging a sizeable part of the Kent coast, Eurotunnel has taken a leading role in funding the White Cliffs Countryside Project. The £40,000 it has put in each year has helped pull in other partners from the private and public sector and a £240,000 contribution from the European Regional Development Fund.

The transformation that has been brought about by the project on the escarpment since 1989 has been remarkable and this week Eurotunnel's contribution will be recognised by the 1997 SSSI Award from English Nature.

Sensitive management, getting the land grazed by cattle and easing out the scrubbers, has enabled rare plants to flourish, notably the late spider orchid. There are probably only about 300 of this particular pink and brown orchid in the country and between 20 and 30 per cent of them are on the Eurotunnel land. Before the project began they were in danger of being swamped by coarse grass.



Eurotunnel has given £40,000 a year to the project

The adonis blue butterfly has prospered too. According to Stephen Davis of English Nature, its recovery has been "fantastic". The caterpillars feed on the yellow-flowered horseshoe vetch, but this too needs the chalk grassland to be grazed. "The adonis blue had become really scarce and now there are thousands of them," Mr Davis said. This month the butterfly is at its most numerous.

Dave Johnson, project and estates manager for Eurotunnel Developments, said the number of plant species on the escarpment had recovered from three or four per square metre a few years ago to between 20 and 30. "We like to think we are doing our bit to improve nature conservation and public access, not just on our own land but across the WCCP area," he said.

Access has been improved and the WCCP run story-telling walks, including over the erroneously named Caesar's Camp - a Norman hill fort offering a panoramic view of the tunnel terminal and, once again, a glimpse of the adonis blue.

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# Why self-pity is bad for your health

Charles Arthur  
Science Editor

Feeling unhappy about your life? Worried about your job prospects? Feel like a failure? Well, there's worse news - you may suffer in the future for having thought that way. A study of middle-aged men has found that moping can be as bad for your heart as smoking 20 cigarettes a day.

According to research in Finland among 942 men, feeling like a failure or having an

uncertain future can speed up the process of arteriosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries. That, in turn, can lead to heart attacks or strokes.

The study found that people who reported high levels of "hopelessness" had a 20 per cent greater increase in the hardening of their blood vessels. "This is the same magnitude of increased risk that one sees in comparing a pack-a-day smoker to a non-smoker," said Dr Susan Everson of the Public Health Institute in Berkeley,

California, who analysed the results, published today in the American Heart Association's official journal.

The study backs up the idea that mental attitudes can have definite physical effects. Dr Everson said it supports "the long-held belief that giving up hope has adverse physical and mental consequences".

The study asked the men to rate their feelings of hopelessness on a three-point scale, of low, moderate or high. Ultrasound pictures then examined the

men's blood vessels to determine the extent of artery narrowing caused by arteriosclerosis.

No clear explanation is offered for why worrying should

walls of blood vessels, and reduces their resiliency.

Nor is it clear whether the effects are reversible, and whether smiling despite feeling

## 'Feeling like a failure may speed up hardening of the arteries'

increase hardening - which is caused by the accumulation of fat, cellular waste products, cholesterol and calcium on the

gloomy can make up for years of long faces.

But Dr Everson hopes to set up a study to investigate

whether feeling hopeless - about job or career prospects, or life in general - could also affect the immune system.

The news appears to leave workers in the modern world with few comfortably healthy niches. Last year, a Danish study of 2,465 bus drivers over seven years found that workload - as measured by the intensity of traffic on the drivers' routes - was the factor most strongly associated with death or admission to hospital with a heart attack. The incidence of death

and hospitalisation in those with higher workloads was more than twice that in the group with low workloads.

The *British Medical Journal* warned at the time that "overwork can kill". But now it seems that worrying about work - or lack of it - can be bad too.

Dr Everson said that more research is needed to determine what mechanisms and background underlie the latest findings. "We don't know, for example, whether some of these people had always felt like this.

You can imagine that if you felt that way for a long time then it might become a structure of your life."

It is known that stress such as depression and anxiety can affect the production of various body hormones. "These factors may be at play in individuals who are highly hopeless," she said. More work would be needed to identify "social, psychological and physiological factors that lead to hopelessness, as well as the factors that may alleviate it."

## Forty years of happiness ... in the marriage that never was



Mr and Mrs Horace and Pattie Evans with their grandson, Greg. A vicar's oversight means that, technically, they are not married

Photograph: Rob Stratton

Claire Garner

Horace and Pattie Evans were delighted when their children announced that they were sending them to Paris on a second honeymoon. The trip would have been the perfect celebration of their ruby wedding anniversary. But when they applied for passports they discovered that they had been living in sin for the last 40 years. They were never married in the first place - and now the church refuses to "re-marry" them.

Their devastating discovery came at the register office in Newport, South Wales, a few miles from where they tied the knot back in 1956. The registrar went to fetch the relevant documents, including a copy of their marriage certificate, and returned ashen-faced. "I don't know how to tell you this," she ventured. "But legally you're not married."

The vicar who married them, at St Mary's Parish Church in Risca, by all accounts a conscientious man, had apparently failed to sign the certificate. "At first I laughed," said Mr Evans. "Forty years of living in sin and I've enjoyed every minute of it."

Ironically, his wife, a dance teacher, had always gone by her maiden name, Miss Winnill.

Their daughter, Kathryn Price, 40, is both thrilled and horrified by the news. Ever since she was young, she has wanted to be a bridesmaid at her parents' wedding, and now it looks as if she may get the chance. However, she is less amused by another aspect.

"Dad said 'you know what that makes you now ...', I said 'oh, don't say that'."

Mrs Evans, 64, wants to have another ceremony for the sake of her two children and seven grandchildren.

"I know that they have been brought up in a different age, when marriage isn't like it was when we got married, but lately I have felt it is not right that we're not married legally. I would never have lived with someone and cohabited would Horace."

Their grandson, Greg Price, 10, says he would prefer them to be married "properly". "It feels kind of strange that Nan and Bampy aren't legally married. It feels that they are not as close as we thought they were."

At this, Mr and Mrs Evans shriek with laughter. They have never been closer, as Greg well knows. "The only place Nan goes without Bampy is work and the only place Bampy goes without Nan is to get his pension," Greg says.

Amid all the flights of fancy about whether the second wedding would be white, whether they would have a video of the service and so on, Mr Evans is genuinely concerned about the legal implications of leaving the situation as it is.

The vicar who married them has since died, and the present minister at the church is nonplussed about the prospect of a re-marriage.

"He said it wasn't necessary because we are married in the eyes of God," said Mr Evans. "But what about in the eyes of the law? Solicitors and QCs can twist anything these days."

At 68, Mr Evans' health is not good. Eleven years ago he had a triple heart bypass and he is due for another operation. He cannot hear the idea that there might be questions about his wife's eligibility for a widow's pension, should he die.

A spokesman for the Church suggested that the couple seek legal advice. Norman Doe, a lecturer at the Cardiff Law School, said yesterday that the Evans should not worry.

"I don't know of any specific case of these being tackled judicially, but in the light of very basic principles about consent, no court would consider this marriage invalid."

## Police to review evidence in M25 murder convictions

Ian Burrell

An independent police inquiry was announced yesterday into the evidence which led to two men being convicted of a murder and a series of vicious robberies carried out close to the M25 motorway.

The Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) has asked Greater Manchester Police to review the original Surrey Police investigation into two members of the so-called "M25 Three". It is the first time that the newly formed CCRC has called for a new police investigation of a case.

One of the men, Raphael Rowe, said yesterday that he was concerned by the prospect of police officers investigating each other. The review may be his last chance of having the case overturned.

Greater Manchester Police will produce a report on the evidence against Rowe and Michael Davis which will be passed to the commissioners so that they can decide whether the case should be referred to the Court of Appeal.

The two men - along with Randolph Johnson whose case is not being reviewed - were



Raphael Rowe and Michael Davis: Maintain innocence

jailed for a brutal crime spree close to London's orbital motorway in 1988.

The series of robberies in Surrey, in which householders and motorists were tied up and beaten, included the murder of Peter Hurburgh, a hairdresser, who was stripped, battered and then doused in petrol. His attackers stole £10.

Rowe and Johnson were not identified by the robbery victims or by Mr Hurburgh's partner Alan Eley. There was no forensic evidence to link them to the offences.

An earlier appeal in 1993 was

unsuccessful after judges ruled that undisclosed police notes which cast doubt on the identity of the attackers were not a "material irregularity".

But the inquiry will include fresh representations from the men and their lawyers.

Andrew Myatt, a spokesman for the CCRC, said he could not predict the length of the investigation, which was the pair's remaining avenue to a new appeal bar a judicial review.

He said: "We could have had it investigated by Surrey police who dealt with the case but

it was felt more appropriate for it to be referred to an outside force."

Speaking from Maidstone Prison, Rowe welcomed the inquiry but expressed concern that the investigation would be mounted by the police.

"Once again we will have the police investigating the police. I am into my ninth year of imprisonment - when will the British justice system stand up and see the facts."

"We are innocent - set us free," he said.

Pauline Smith, spokeswoman for the M25 Three Campaign, said the decision was a mixed blessing since the men had already been promised that a decision would be taken on whether to refer their case to the Court of Appeal before the CCRC came into existence in March.

She said: "Obviously they have read the papers and there are doubts, serious doubts, in the case."

"The fact that it is being investigated can only be positive but on the other hand it is very frustrating that now it is 1997 and one wonders how long it will take them to reach the right decision."

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# Temper rise over volcano island

From Abrams  
Political Correspondent  
Phil Davison  
Belham Bridge, Montserrat

A new steering committee was set up to oversee the crisis in Montserrat last night amid deepening anger over the handling of the affair. Its chief minister, David Brandt, claimed yesterday that Britain wanted to "close down" the island.

There were suggestions that Clare Short, the International Development Secretary, was being relieved of responsibility for the volcano-hit islanders after bad publicity surrounding her role in the affair. However, officials at Ms Short's department denied this last night, saying that the Foreign Office had always been in overall charge.

The new committee, made up of officials from the Department for International Development, Home Office, Foreign Office, Ministry of Defence, Treasury and Bank of England, will meet for the first time today. It will discuss resettlement packages for the islanders both in the region and in Britain, the development of infrastructure in the north of the island for those residents who choose to stay and assistance to the nearby island of Antigua, to which 3,000 Montserratians have fled.

Last night Downing Street issued a statement from Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary. "Our assistance strategy needs to be delivered speedily and efficiently. That requires co-operation across Whitehall. The new committee will ensure

that the Government's four-point plan is implemented without delay," he said.

A decision is also to be taken today on whether Ms Short's deputy, George Foulkes, will visit Montserrat. Mr Brandt has already suggested that he would not be welcome.

Last night Mr Foulkes refuted suggestions that the situation had been exacerbated by his misunderstanding of a scientific report. It had been claimed that he had exaggerated the dangers of a massive cataclysmic explosive eruption, which were in fact negligible.

"I quoted directly from the report... which said that the scientists had previously regarded the possibility of a cataclysmic eruption as negligible but could not now rule it out," he wrote.

The Soufriere Hills volcano staged its highest recent eruption a week yesterday, sending red hot ash, rock and gas into a valley less than two miles from an inhabited area. British scientists said there could be worse eruptions in the next few days, advised people to wear hard hats and warned them to be ready to "make an orderly exit" from danger zones.

Despite the warnings, only a handful of Montserratians left on a British-organised "voluntary repatriation" ferry to the nearby island of Antigua yesterday. Only a few dozen of the 4,000 remaining islanders - from an original population of 11,000 - have left since the evacuation began on Saturday.

Mr Brandt said a new housing project backed by Jamaica "shamed the Mother Country."

Britain had frozen its own emergency housing programme along with other projects, he said, despite pledges that those who chose to stay would be looked after.

"I have the impression Britain wants us all to leave, and to close the island down," Mr Brandt told *The Independent*.

Test for Robin Cook's ethical policy, page 11  
Letters, page 13



Hideaway: Designed as a command post, the site includes 26 acres, a dummy lodge, the 9,000 sq ft bunker, and lots of barbed wire fencing

Photographs: Colin McPherson

## Still worried about nuclear oblivion? MoD bunker for sale: £100,000, pleasant location



Restricted entry: The main 328ft tunnel slopes gently from the 'lodge' to the bunker

Stephen Goodwin  
Heritage Correspondent

Paranoids who believe that the likelihood of nuclear oblivion persists despite the end of the Cold War have only a few more days to get in a bid for one of the most bomb-proof properties ever to come on the market.

The Ministry of Defence is selling a 25-room underground bunker set in 26 acres of hilltop overlooking the Aberdeenshire coast. Built in 1952 and fenced in with barbed wire, it appears to have been intended for use as a command post in the event of a nuclear war.

With an inscrutability worthy of the Cold War, the MoD will say only that it was "an emergency communications centre". However, the 328ft-inclined tunnel that leads into the hillside from a dummy lodge before reaching the heart of

the facility suggests a pretty serious emergency was being catered for.

The 9,000sq ft bunker has bedrooms marked for all three services, dining rooms, a kitchen and a huge two-storey operations room. The surface "lodge" has been given a rural appearance. Stone-built, it has a slate roof and full-length veranda.

However, the chain-link fence topped with barbed wire rather spoils the disguise. David MacLeod, of Rydeo International Property Consultants, who is handling the sale, expects offers to exceed £100,000 although he concedes that the bunker is a bit of an unknown quantity. He expects a closing date for bids to be set in about 10 days.

"We have had several people indicate they are going to bid but with a thing like this you are never sure how it is going to go," he said. The site is above the

former fishing village of Inverurie, now a commuter dormitory for Aberdeen. The most valuable part of the property is probably the 26-acres of farmland and a radio mast leased to Aberdeenshire Council also brings in £5,000 a year.

While it is thought that planning permission could be secured to turn the dummy lodge into a real home, living in the bunker itself would be impractical. Nor is consent likely for any more housing on the land. Storage and a tourist attraction are among uses being considered by potential purchasers.

Visitors have been struck by how cold and airless the bunker is. A sign points to an "emergency exit" although if the subterranean command post had ever been used in earnest it is hard to imagine anyone wanting to make a dash for the outdoor wasteland above.

## Journalists fear police bid to black out green protesters

Paul McCann  
Media Correspondent

Journalists, photographers and cameramen believe that the police have adopted aggressive tactics with members of the media to stop them covering environmental protests.

A series of arrests of cameramen and photographers has prevented images of demonstrators being arrested getting to newspapers and broadcasters this year. The

National Union of Journalists (NUJ) believes that the practice is on the increase even though most cases are thrown out of court.

Last week a cameraman from the production company Undercurrent was arrested with a group of protesters who had occupied the offices of Rank Leisure to protest at the company's plans to build an Oasis holiday centre in the Lymington Forest in Kent.

"First they tried to arrest me

on suspicion of burglary,"

Roddy Mansfield said last week. "When I showed them my NUJ card they took it off me and asked me to quote my PIN number. Because I could only quote two of the numbers while being held by two burly officers they then arrested me on suspicion of forging the press card."

"The plan was to sell the footage of these hyped-up tactical support group officers coming through the windows to arrest these women protesters.

But they seized my tape as evidence."

Undercurrent Productions, which makes programmes for Channel 4, has conducted its own survey of cameramen and journalists who cover protests and believes that 15 have been arrested this year in the course of doing their job.

Most notorious was the case of Nick Cobbing, the only photographer to get into the trees at the Manchester Airport protest site. The rest of the press

was kept in a pen close to the site and could not get photographs.

Mr Cobbing got agreement from the climbers hired by the sheriff's department to stay in the trees and take photographs. When they asked him to come down with them he came down. But once he was back on the ground he was arrested by the police for obstructing the sheriff's officers.

"They took my cameras and film and held me in a van at the

site for two hours. Then they drove me to Salford police station where I was held for another 12 hours."

By the time he was bailed - on condition that he did not return to the site and that he stayed in his London home every night - no newspapers could use his pictures of the arrests and so none appeared.

A spokesman for the Metropolitan Police said that there was no policy to stop media coverage of protests. "But anyone

who puts pen to paper or takes a photograph these days claims to be a journalist. It is up to the officer at the time to arrest whoever they think is breaking the law, it wouldn't matter whether they were a journalist or even an MP."

Tim Gopill, of the NUJ, believes that the new kinds of protest, whether they be against new roads or treatment of veal calves, have brought new tactics from the police. "For a policeman to arrest a journalist while he is

doing his job can only mean his intention is to stop the protest being reported," he said. "The increased arrests we are seeing could be attributable to the changed nature of protests we see. People aren't marching in the streets, they are trying to obstruct the things they oppose."

The NUJ has won sizeable compensation from the police for lost earnings by photographers who have been unable to sell their pictures because they have been arrested.

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## NHS inquiry after claims girl died of overdose

Health chiefs have launched an investigation into claims a five-year-old girl died after she was accidentally given a massive drugs overdose in hospital.

Noorjehan Khan died in her father's arms at King's College Hospital, south-east London, after she was allegedly given 10 times her usual dose of a drug at South Cleveland Hospital, Middlesbrough.

NHS bosses said today that an internal inquiry would investigate the overdose claims alongside a police probe mounted by Scotland Yard and Cleveland Police. Detectives were called in after a post-mortem examination failed to reveal the exact cause of death. Further tests were being carried out.

John Gibb, divisional manager of South Tees Hospital NHS Trust, said: "As well as co-operating with the police we are conducting our own inquiries. I believe a formal inquiry has been commenced."

He would not comment on claims that Noorjehan, who had been seriously ill since she was six months old, had been the victim of a blunder.

Tests later revealed high levels of Tacrolimus in her blood. A doctor at King's College was allegedly told by South Cleveland that there had been a "misunderstanding over the dosage". According to the Express newspaper, staff had given her 3mg, instead of 0.3mg, of Tacrolimus during the six days she was at South Cleveland.

### DAILY POEM

I Saw a Jolly Hunter

By Charles Causley

I saw a jolly hunter  
With a jolly gun  
Walking in the country  
In the jolly sun.

In the jolly meadow  
Sat a jolly hare.  
Saw the jolly hunter.  
Took jolly care.

Hunter jolly eager -  
Sight of jolly prey.  
Forgot gun pointing  
Wrong jolly way.

Jolly hunter jolly head  
Over heels gone.  
Jolly old safety catch  
Not jolly on.

Bang went the jolly gun.  
Hunter jolly dead.  
Jolly hare got clean away.  
Jolly good, I said.

This week's Daily Poems celebrate the 80th birthday of the Cornish poet Charles Causley. After wartime service in the Royal Navy, he returned to Launceston, where he has lived, taught in primary schools, and written ever since. Charles Causley's *Collected Poems 1951-1997*, which include some new and previously unpublished poems, are published by Macmillan (£20) and his *Selected Poems for Children* by Macmillan Children's Books (£5.99).

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Master craftsman: Matteo Napoli creating one of his extraordinary ice creams in his Salerno 'laboratory'. The fruit and vegetables stuffed with ice-cream are a speciality

## After the salt-cod gelato, what more can an ice-cream maestro produce?

Andrew Gumbel  
Lancaster

In a modest shop just outside of Naples, an inventor is at work

It began with an announcement from the Italian bar and restaurant association: the discovery of the strangest ice-cream in the world. Somewhere in the Naples region, the association said in a note published last week, "it is possible to taste an unforgettable ice-cream flavoured with - salt cod!"

Who could be the inventor of this extraordinary *gelato al bacalà*? And what on earth did it taste like? A chase was soon on, leading, as it turned out, to the door of Matteo Napoli, ice-cream maker extraordinaire whose shop in an unassuming suburb of Salerno has a dedicated local following but is little known to the rest of Italy.

The salt cod is perhaps the least of the surprises awaiting the unsuspecting visitor. "I've been making that ooc since 1962,"

Matteo - as he insists on being called by one and all - said nonchalantly. "Why don't you look at the other things on offer?"

The other things include rocket ice-cream, popcorn ice-cream, ice-cream with seafood risotto, salmon ice-cream, celery ice-cream, fennel ice-cream, even ice-cream flavoured with short pasta and Borlotti beans. And that is not to mention the other 100-odd, more orthodox flavours, from chestnut to pomegranate to lemon, strawberry and chocolate, that Matteo Napoli has been working on in his 54-year career.

One might be tempted to write off Matteo as a bit of a show-off, someone who is merely amused at the idea of putting preposterous ingredients into the humble ice-cream. But that would be quite wrong.

His aim is nothing less and nothing more than to watch his customers' faces break out into irrepressible smiles as they bite into his creations. For his ice-creams are not only unusual, they also taste fantastic. The savoury confections take a bit of getting used to, but they are beautifully blended to win over the most sceptical of tasters.

"I don't have any secrets. My only trick is to use only the freshest natural ingredients with no artificial additives at all," Matteo said as he began a mouth-watering tour of his cavernous, brightly lit shop and even larger kitchen, known as his "laboratory".

It soon became apparent that this is a very special place indeed. The curled, serrated knives that Matteo's assistants use to gouge the fruit out of hun-

dreds of peaches have been custom-made for him. The whisker-emulsifier machines that turn the raw ingredients into ice-cream have been developed for Matteo by a specialist firm in Bergamo in the north.

For Matteo does not just make very good ice-cream. He is responsible for some of the key technical breakthroughs in his field over the past three decades. Aside from the unusual flavours, he is famous for stuffing fruit and vegetables with ice-cream made from the flesh inside. Perhaps his most important contribution was to pasteurise at least part of the sugar he used. By heating the sugar to 85C, squirting it with freshly squeezed lemon juice and then, when it has cooled, adding bicarbonate of soda, he creates a sweetness close to that

of fructose that ensures a marvellous lightness and delicacy.

If Matteo is not better known, it is largely because he does not want to lose personal control of the creative process and see his business turn into a mini-industry forced to compromise on quality. Early in his career, when he first set up his own shop in Naples, he turned down the opportunity to supply one of the biggest bars in central Salerno, even though it was run by a friend of his. More recently, a British buyer asked him to supply an astonishing 900,000kg per week.

"Of course I said no," said Matteo. "Either you do something properly or you don't do it at all. The great ills of the world are caused by money - money, sex and religion. I prefer to keep things the way they

are." So he remains the proud monarch of his little kingdom in the depressed Salerno hinterland, delighting his dedicated followers, and not worrying too much about status. Every now and again he caters for a wedding in Hawaii or Boston, or flies to Brazil to run a training course, but these are the exception rather than the rule.

His wife, Raffaella, minds the till and the financial end of the business. Their son had ambitions to expand to Rome and beyond, but he died in an accident last year and the family has since closed ranks. Matteo's latest invention is very much a family one: *il gelato bebè Alessandro*, a confection specially made for his infant grandson. It is made of sponge-fingers, honey and milk and, to judge by the reaction of one one-month-old, could turn even the most recalcitrant child into a die-hard ice-cream fan.

## significant shorts

### Senior North Korean envoys flee to West

North Korean officials attacked reporters outside their Cairo embassy after their ambassador to Egypt became the most senior diplomat to defect to the West. South Korean officials said Jang Sung Gil turned up at a Western embassy on Friday requesting asylum and had left with his wife. His brother, Jang Sung Ho, a diplomat based in Paris, had also fled to asylum in a third country with his wife and two children. **Reuters - Geneva**

### Cuba says US is a big pest

Cuba showed a UN meeting pictures of what it said was a US operation to plague the island with a crop-eating pest. Washington dismissed the charge but still had to explain to countries committed to banning biological weapons why a mystery plane was emitting smoke on a low flight path over a remote part of Cuba. **Reuters - Geneva**

### Guerrilla base blasted

Israeli planes attacked a Palestinian guerrilla base outside Beirut after Lebanese guerrillas and Israeli forces fought in south Lebanon. There were no immediate reports of any deaths as the heaviest fighting this year entered its third consecutive week. **AP - Naameh**

### Swedish stadium bombed

A bomb went off in a sports stadium in Gothenburg where football matches will be played if Sweden wins the right to host the 2004 Olympics. The blast at the Ullevi stadium was the latest in a series of attacks against sports facilities apparently aimed at scuppering Sweden's pending Olympic bid. **Reuters - Stockholm**

### Kohl happy with old troupers

Chancellor Helmut Kohl slapped down calls from his coalition for a cabinet reshuffle, saying he saw no reason to change before next year's elections. Mr Kohl, back from his summer break, criticised the Finance Minister, Theo Waigel, for leading calls for a government shake-up but said he expected his old ally to stay on. **Reuters - Bonn**

### Prisoners murdered

Two Jamaican prisoners were charged with murder after a dozen inmates died in violence sparked by a prison commissioner's suggestion that prisoners and guards use condoms. The inmates were involved in attacks on prisoners they believed to be homosexuals at Kingston's General Penitentiary. **AP - Kingston**

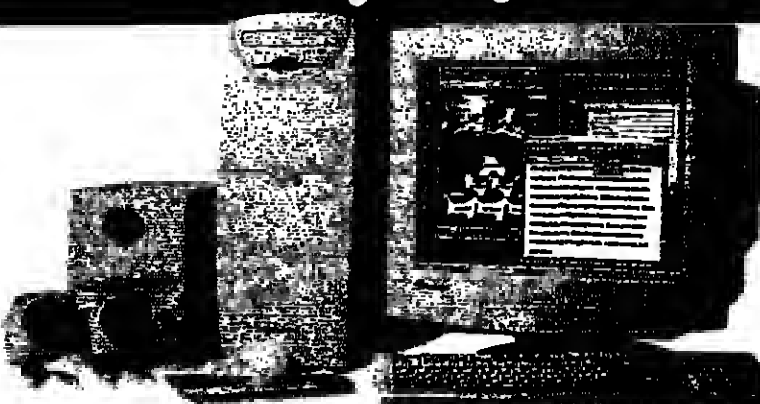
### Neo-Nazi admits parcel plot

A Danish neo-Nazi admitted he mailed detonators to targets in Britain, including a white television personality married to a black man. The man, who cannot be named under a court order, and two others are on trial on terrorism charges. They were arrested after the parcels were intercepted in Sweden. **AP - Copenhagen**

### Shelling casualties put at 60

The Indian Army said Pakistani troops suffered 60 to 70 casualties in shelling at the weekend. It was the first official confirmation of reports that Pakistan lost heavily in shooting across the line dividing Kashmir into Indian- and Pakistani-controlled sectors. **Reuters - Uri**

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## international

## China speeds up justice and doubles execution rate

Teresa Poole  
Peking

China's anti-crime crackdown has led to a doubling in the number of reported executions. Punishment has in some cases been meted out so swiftly that defendants were shot within days of being arrested, and the type of crimes which have warranted the death penalty included VAT receipt theft, stealing a large haul of ballpoint pens and badminton rackets, and cattle rustling.

The figures for 1996 have been compiled by Amnesty International, which every year collates reports of death sentences and confirmed executions in the Chinese newspapers and other public sources. This represents only a proportion of the actual executions – the real figure being a state secret – but gives a reliable guide to trends in the Chinese judicial system.

For 1996, the human rights group recorded more than 6,100 death sentences and 4,367 confirmed exe-

cutions. This compares with 3,110 and 2,190 respectively for 1995. Last year's gruesome tally produced the highest figures recorded by Amnesty's research, which has been published since the early 1980s. The only comparable year was 1983 when an earlier anti-crime campaign similarly led to a wave of mass executions.

The sharp rise last year was clearly due to the "Yanda" (Strike Hard) campaign launched against China's rising crime rate in April 1996. By May hardly a week was going by with-

out reports of mass public sentencing rallies and mass executions somewhere in China. According to newspaper stories at the time about specific crimes, Chinese courts seemed to be processing cases at such a speed that any possibility of a meaningful or fair trial had been abandoned. Last year the Chinese government was boasting to the international human rights community about improved safeguards for defendants in its judicial procedures.

According to Amnesty, the num-

bers of crimes which are punishable by death in China has spiralled over the last 10 years, particularly for non-violent crimes such as embezzlement, fraud and theft. On 25 June last year in Shanghai, Hou Zhijiang and Wei Xueming were executed for stealing ballpoint pens and badminton rackets valued at \$4,400.

The next day, Chen Zhong and two other men were executed in Sichuan for attempting to steal value added tax receipts from a tax office. Zhang Xizhong was executed in

Sichuan on 13 May for stealing 14 cattle.

The speed at which trials and executions have been carried out have been taking place in a judicial system which Amnesty describes as having an "alarming potential for miscarriages of justice". In Jilin province, three people were arrested for stealing from a car on 21 May, sentenced to death on 27 May, and executed on 31 May. There is no meaningful appeals process.

The bulge in reported executions

and death sentences lasted from May to September last year, according to Amnesty's figures. This included the anti-drugs crackdown in the run-up to Anti-Drugs day on 26 June, with 447 confirmed executions in 1996 for drug trafficking or possession.

While foreigners are kept away from execution grounds, most Chinese people see executions as an accepted part of crime control. The "Strike Hard" campaign was widely welcomed – though it failed to solve the worsening crime situation.

## Last Red jailed for killings at Wall

Final bid to bring East German Communist leadership to book

## Agencies

Berlin - Egon Krenz, East Germany's last hardline Communist leader, was whisked off to jail yesterday after being sentenced to six and a half years for the deaths of people trying to escape over the Berlin Wall.

A Berlin court found Krenz, 60, guilty of manslaughter for four killings during the 1980s at the barrier that divided the city between 1961 and 1989. Even though Krenz did not pull the trigger, the court said the successor to Erich Honecker was none the less guilty because he shaped the shoot-to-kill orders that were carried out by border guards who shot at least 263 people. "I won't give up!" Krenz called when a supporter in the back of the courtroom shouted "All the best, Egon!"

There was a gasp in the courtroom from a large group of old-guard Communist supporters when judge Josef Hoch

ordered Krenz detained immediately – unusual for a German court – because he said there was a danger he would try to flee.

Krenz, who had denounced the trial as "victors' justice", was taken to the adjoining Moabit prison, a mile west of where the Wall once stood.

Two other former members of East Germany's Politburo, Guenter Schabowski and Guenter Kleiber, were found guilty of manslaughter for three killings at the Wall. They received terms of three years but were set free until the verdicts became legally binding.

Both pushed their way through a crowd of journalists without comment. The trial, lasting one and a half years, was widely seen as the last major attempt by united Germany to bring East Berlin's Communist leadership to book.

Honecker, who ruled for 18 years before being toppled and



Long wait: A joint plaintiff at the trial, Hans Peter Eich (left), who was shot in 1961 while trying to escape, and Krenz (right), arriving at court



Photographs: AFP Reuters

who would have celebrated his 85th birthday on yesterday, was released in the middle of his trial in 1993 because of ill-health. He died in 1994 in Chile.

Seven other senior East German figures, including the former defence minister Heinz Kessler, are serving three to six years after conviction last year on 15 counts of manslaughter

and attempted manslaughter between 1980 and 1989.

Krenz had expressed regret during the trial for the deaths at the Wall around Berlin and at the border between the two Germanys, which victims' groups say exceeded 500. But he insisted that, as a satellite state of the Soviet Union, East Germany had no control over its

borders. As a key part of his defence, Krenz presented a letter from the former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev, who criticised the court for holding Krenz responsible for the Cold War killings.

But Mr Hoch said prosecutors presented clear evidence that the East Berlin Politburo zealously turned broad guide-

lines from Moscow into the grisly machinery of death. "The Politburo was responsible for border security," Mr Hoch said. "The guards were in fact given an ideological order to shoot. The guards were taught that the refugees were enemies of peace and traitors to East Germany who should be destroyed."

Mr Hoch said that the East

Berlin regime, fully aware that more than 2 million people had fled the country between 1949 and 1961, had built the Wall and made it increasingly lethal because they knew that it was the only way to keep the rest from leaving.

Krenz had planned to hold a news conference in a central Berlin hotel after the verdict.

His son Carsten read a statement saying he planned to appeal to the European Court of Justice. "I will not beg the Federal Republic for mercy," Krenz said in the statement. "I was not convicted because of crimes, but rather because of my political position. The verdict is the Berlin state court's revenge for the existence of East Germany."

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## Israel throws out Lebanese

Robert Fisk  
Beirut

For the fourth time in a month, Israel, has ordered Lebanese families out of their homes in its south Lebanon occupation zone and deported them north of their front line without money or identity papers.

The latest victims of Israel's policy are a 30-year-old widow and her five children who were told by an Israeli officer that their presence was "undesirable", before being taken by soldiers of the so-called South Lebanon Army – Israel's proxy militia – and deported northwards near the village of Kfar Tibnit. Wadad Hussein had earlier been held for 45 days by the

Israelis in their notorious jail at Khiam – where torture has been widely used on the inmates – but she says she was given no reason for her imprisonment.

Another Lebanese woman, Fatima Akhras, 25, was earlier expelled from her home in identical circumstances. So was Amal al-Baba on 14 August, along with her five children. In her case, however, there is no doubt as to why Israel deported the family – to punish her husband, Mohamed al-Charami, who was once Israel's most trusted collaborator in the Lebanese city of Sidon.

Leading a gang of indiscriminate militiamen who would arrest Lebanese for interrogation by the Israelis, he was then

known by his Israeli code-name, Abu Arrida. When they retreated from Sidon in 1985, the Israelis provided Abu Arrida and his rifle-armed army with a ship to sail for Israel where he and his fellow collaborators were rewarded with Israeli citizenship.

Israel has now stripped Abu Arrida of his new citizenship, and imprisoned him in Haifa, after accusing him of "collaborating with the services of the Lebanese state" during his trips between the Israeli town of Nahariya and the family's village of Qleia inside the occupation zone. Whether true or not – and many of Israel's SLA men are now secretly giving information to the Hizbollah guerrillas in south Lebanon and Lebanese

army intelligence – Abu Arrida's family were punished for his apparent double betrayal.

According to Amal al-Baba, the Israelis took their identity papers and the Israeli-issued residence permits to live in the occupation zone away from the family. She says that an Israeli lawyer contacted her, offering to defend her husband in court, but that she had no money to pay him. The family of another SLA man, apparently kidnapped by the Hizbollah, has suffered the same fate. A week ago, his father Toufic Salame, along with his wife and daughter, were taken from their home by Israeli troops and expelled from their village. No reason was given for the deportation.

## Pope's popularity with the young puzzles French

The secular and leftist press had predicted a débâcle of at least an embarrassment. Even the organisers had played down expectations, saying they would be happy with a turnout of 300,000.

In the event, young French people descended on Paris in their hundreds of thousands, not to see a pop festival, or a sporting event, but to celebrate mass with the Pope at a race-course.

More than 500,000 young French people are estimated to have camped out at Longchamps overnight. They were joined by hundreds of thousands of young people who had come to the twelfth Catholic youth festival from 160 other countries. The congregation was put at 1,200,000, the largest audience for a religious occasion in France for more than half a century.

The French press and French commentators, both religious and secular, were busy yesterday trying to make sense of an event which appeared to stand many accepted facts about French youth on their head. The right-wing and Catholic *Le Figaro* said a "new generation of Christians" had been born. Even the secularist *Le Monde* asked whether this was the beginning of a "Longchamps"

More than a million flock to festival but Catholicism's decline continues. John Lichfield reports from Paris

generation, who would be like the children of May 1968 in reverse: a generation seeking clear rules, firm morality and the leadership of the old.

*Liberation*, the centre-left newspaper which was itself born in the 1968 student revolt, declared that, like the doubting disciple Thomas, it had to accept the evidence of its eyes. The massive attendance at Longchamps had something important to say about France.

Laurent Joffrin, the newspaper's editor, said it was possible to minimise the event. "There is a Catholic genius for spectacle which has nothing to learn from rave parties, the Tour de France, or homosexual carnivals." The uniform of many of the pilgrims owed more to Benetton than to the habits of monks or nuns.

But, all cynicism apart, he said, leftists must now accept that a large section of French youth felt alienated by the individualism and materialism of the modern world. They were turning not to politics, but to the

social message of the Church, however much they might disapprove or ignore the Pope's teaching on contraception and abortion.

This is one interpretation. Judging by the vox pops and analyses in *Liberation* and other newspapers, the great majority of the "Longchamps generation" came from a more straightforward, right-wing French Catholic tradition. They were overwhelmingly provincial and well-behaved. Their transport had been mostly organised by Catholic schools, scout and youth groups. One man in his early 20s said: "I am the archetype of the provincial petit bourgeois Catholic. The Pope is my spiritual guide. Philippe de Villiers [the ultra-conservative Catholic aristocrat who campaigned against Maastricht] is my political model."

None of this is to denigrate the scale and emotional impact of the event, which was followed by many millions of other French people on television. But it is important to place

Longchamps in its context. By all the usual vital signs, Catholicism in France remains in slow but relentless decline. More than half of young French people say they have no religion and are indifferent to Christian culture. Religious vocations have collapsed. Ordinations of priests are down to fewer than 100 a year. Only 5 per cent of priests are less than 40 years old. Regular church-going is down to 17 per cent.

Many of those interviewed on Sunday admitted that they did not regularly go to mass. "In church, it's just the grey heads. Here, you feel in touch with something strong," said one 18-year-old girl.

Henri Tincq, writing in *Le Monde*, said the event had more than a flavour of US-style, Protestant evangelism, trading in simple emotion rather than profound feeling or contemplation. Several members of the French hierarchy said afterwards that they hoped the event would boost the number of religious vocations among the young. But Mr Tincq said "no-one should seriously believe" that all these youngsters in T-shirts were going to pour themselves into parish work and the structures of the Church.

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# Cook joins Manila in child abuse mission

Stephen Vines  
Hong Kong

Governments usually go to grand halls to sign bilateral agreements with overseas countries. This will not be the case when Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, visits the Philippines at the end of the week. Instead, he will find himself in a rundown building where abused and street children seek refuge.

Located in what used to be the heart of Manila's red-light district, the Bahay Tuliyan centre provides a modest refuge for children, many of whom have been sexually abused.

Britain has provided assistance to the centre and is planning to step up co-operation with the Philippines to prevent child abuse, especially sexual exploitation involving foreigners.

Although Britain is not considered to be the worst offender, its nationals have figured prominently in the few prosecutions brought by the Philippine authorities against child sex abusers. Of the four foreigners convicted of child sex crimes, two are British: Steven Mitchell was found guilty of sexual activity with small boys and Michael Clarke was convicted of organising sex tours.

Considerable publicity has also surrounded the arrest of Douglas Slade, who is charged with sexual offences against under-age children. He is one of 45 foreigners arrested since the Philippines decided to get tough on paedophiles.

Britain was among the first foreign countries to offer assistance. Last year, officers from Scotland Yard conducted a two-week course on the investigation of child-abuse cases. Following the course, the Philippines National Bureau of Investigation established the first national Anti-Child Abuse Division.

Now further assistance is being planned, with a more ex-

## Britain helps Philippines fight under-age sexual exploitation

teous tie-up between the Philippine police and the Durham Constabulary. Officers from Durham will be dispatched to conduct a four-week course for trainers, which will focus on detection techniques and the handling of victims.

The two countries will also step up co-operation in sharing intelligence on the movements and activities of known paedophiles and other serious criminals. With its European partners, Britain is helping to equip the new abuse division.

Although Mr Cook will generate publicity for the fight against abuse, the British effort is little more than a drop in the ocean in a country where the United Nations fund Unicef estimates that 60,000 children work as prostitutes. Incest and abuse in the home are also rampant.

"We are questioning the effectiveness of the crackdown against child sex offenders," said Elizabeth Pucate, the spokeswoman for the Manila-based End Child Prostitution Pornography and Trafficking (ECPAT) campaign. She says there has been some progress but there is also frustration over the lack of a more comprehensive effort to eradicate abuse by tackling the problem at a community level and providing rehabilitation for children involved in prostitution.

ECPAT says it has evidence that organisations in countries, including Britain, are still producing advertising material about child prostitution in Asia, describing the Philippines as a haven for child sex.

Adrian Thorpe, Britain's am-

bassador in Manila, says the British government is determined to play its role in helping to combat child abuse. He stresses that the Government "feels strongly that those who abuse children should be brought to justice".

This will be an uphill battle in the Philippines where there is a marked reluctance to tackle the domestic problems of child abuse. Although rape cases are prosecuted, other offences are generally unreported and not the subject of police investigation. As far as foreign paedophiles are concerned, the government used to be content merely to deport them, even though some kept coming back.



Dangerous harvest: A family help each other haul away sacks of contaminated maize in Nairobi yesterday. Hundreds of slum dwellers scrambled for the corn which was dumped on Saturday because it was suspected of being unfit for human consumption. Photograph: George Mulala/Reuters

# Early test for Labour's new ethical policy

Richard Lloyd Parry

Robin Cook embarks this week on one of his most delicate diplomatic tasks as Foreign Secretary: an official visit, intended to promote human rights, to a group of friendly countries accused of abuses.

During a five-day tour of South-East Asia he will discuss "deepening relations across Asia" and "ensuring respect for human rights", according to the British High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, where he arrives tomorrow. The first is the standard diplomatic task of further warming generally cosy relations in a region which has strong historical, cultural and trading links with Britain.

The second relates to Labour's commitment to foreign policy with an "ethical dimension".

The challenge for Mr Cook is to frame his humanitarian

disappointed many who had earlier praised him. Since then the new policy has found little practical expression.

Apart from an oppressive Internal Security Act (inherited from its British colonisers), Malaysia has one of the region's better rights records, although a court recently convicted a group of Muslim women for wearing bathing costumes at a beauty contest.

But Mr Cook's concerns are unlikely to get a sympathetic hearing from the Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamed, who recently called for the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights to be rewritten on the grounds that it was "formulated by the superpowers, which did not understand the needs of poorer countries".

Things will not be much better in Singapore, where a trial last week raised the question of political freedom. JB Jeyaretnam, a left-wing opposition MP, is being sued for defamation by Singapore's prime minister after making factual statements at an opposition rally during last December's election campaign.

Mr Jeyaretnam's British QC, George Carman, last week accused the Prime Minister, Goh Chok Tong, of using the trial "as a method of causing financial oppression on this 71-year old man because you wanted him out of Parliament".

Earlier this year a US State Department report referred to the government's "attempts to intimidate the opposition through the threat of libel suits". Will Mr Cook support Mr Jeyaretnam, a left-leaning lawyer, like him? Or will he concentrate on building on Singapore's growing trade links with Britain?

The dilemma will be presented most acutely in Indonesia, whose numerous alleged rights abuses are seen by many campaigners as a test case for New Labour's policy. Last weekend two tribesmen in the remote Irian Jaya province were said to have been shot, and others injured by Indonesian troops flown in to quell unrest at a copper and gold mine part-owned by a British company.



Cook: Delicate task of not ruffling too many feathers

concerns but avoid offending the sensitivities of his hosts at what, for several of them, is an unusually sensitive time.

In May Mr Cook was applauded by rights organisations after unveiling his policy a fortnight after taking office. Promising not to forget about "political values" when we check in our passports on diplomatic business, he announced an annual report on human rights, an end to arms sales to repressive regimes, and "support [for] the demands of other people for the democratic rights on which we insist for ourselves".

But Mr Cook's decision to allow the planned sale of Hawk military aircraft to Indonesia

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## the leader page

## Let there be light on the murky world of MI5

Allegations of extensive MI5 bugging operations, made by the former agent David Shayler, are not only plausible, they are deeply worrying. They are of a piece with the story told by Peter Wright in *Spycatcher*, they cohere with the report by Cathy Massiter, an honourable woman to whom dumb loyalty to the Security Service counted for less than the need to tell the public the full extent of its surveillance, personal files and monitoring.

What Mr Shayler confirms is MI5's promiscuity. Its staff, along with some secretaries, prime ministers and other senior politicians, condoned operations that at best displayed a cavalier attitude to personal privacy and at worst illegally infringed basic civil liberties. In a sense, though, the most serious charge is that of downright inefficiency. During the Cold War there were plenty of real enemies at large. To waste scarce public resources listening, instead, to UB40 lyrics, let alone to Jack Straw's or Peter Mandelson's phone calls, is little short of criminal. Even the most rudimentary political intelligence would differentiate the groups of bearded teenagers and twentysomethings competing for office in the National Union of Students, from out-and-out subversives. The absence of such judgement inevitably makes outsiders wonder about MI5's capacity, never mind its purpose.

As for Mr Mandelson – given the anti-Communist credentials of his grand-

father Herbert Morrison, it seems ludicrous to imagine him being recruited as a Soviet bloc "sleeper": the mere idea tells us all we need to know about the blind, right-wing biases of the organisation. If MI5's Cold War business was defending Britain, the country its staff had in their hearts and minds was not the one lived in by the rest of us – a pluralist place where a position in the National Council for Civil Liberties is hardly the mark of Cain.

But, of course, that is all in the past (except that the files are still extant, and inaccessible to the victims of MI5 paranoia). The Cold War is over. The student president of yesteryear is now Home Secretary and, as such, responsible for the Security Service. The suspected Soviet agent Mandelson now sits close to the spot in the Cabinet Office that co-ordinates flows of intelligence. And besides (it is claimed) MI5 is reformed, chastened, modernised, feminised. So should we just relax, treat these latest allegations like a piece of contemporary historical fiction and let the 2,000-strong organisation boused in splendour on Millbank go its own sweet way? Messrs Straw and Mandelson may, this week, face more urgent matters in the shape, for example, of bulging prisons and millennium domes, but sooner or later they will need to get their heads together on the subject of MI5's future. Although the commitment of Tony Blair's administration to open



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government is at best ambiguous, we have to hope that when they do review the Security Service they will do so openly. The public – the paymasters and alleged beneficiaries – have a right to know its powers, its costs, and above all what in the 21st century its purpose is supposed to be. They may well conclude that its historical term is over.

Jack Straw's band is going to be forced soon. Labour has promised to reform the Metropolitan Police, replacing the Home Secretary as police authority for London with a committee of magistrates and local authority nominees. What this will precipitate – surely

– is some fundamental review of the operations of Special Branch and those other units within Scotland Yard which do "national" work. There is, clearly, a world of difference between the skills and forces needed to police the streets of Brixton or Bexleyheath and those needed to protect diplomats, harry terrorists and do whatever else Special Branch should do. But where does the remit of Special Branch end and that of the Security Service begin, and how do both relate to the growing apparatus of national criminal intelligence gathering?

Only Pollyanna says everything in the post-Cold War garden is lovely, that

there is no longer a need for a domestic agency with the capacity to tap telephones, monitor the flow of funds, and follow papers and people. Counter-espionage is no ignoble function, and spying and other games of international relations will continue. It remains true that freedom requires vigilance (just so long as you keep in mind what freedom is for). But whether this work requires MI5, with its operational past and culture and vast superstructure, is a question the Conservative government consistently refused to ask. For all its talk about effectiveness in government, it spared security and policing from basic interrogation of costs and benefits.

MI5, meanwhile, has been allowed to get away with waffle about the drugs war and combating the IRA. So what is the Security Service doing now Irish peace has (temporarily) broken out, especially since the Government believes that the solution to terrorism is not counter-terrorism, but a political readjustment in Ulster? Meanwhile MI5 may have something to bring to intelligence-gathering about international narcotics trafficking, but it is not the only agency with expertise. Ministers should be deeply suspicious of government agencies (Customs and Excise as well as MI5) that talk up drugs as a way of protecting bureaucratic structures.

The British love the secret world – witness the puny powers Parliament awarded its own intelligence committee,

and the pusillanimity of the Public Accounts Committee in failing to ask for proper studies of MI5's effectiveness (an international comparison with other counter-espionage agencies, say). Until 1989 that love-affair at least had some strategic justification. Now, however, it risks being pathological. It is time for an exact rendering of accounts for the security and counter-espionage apparatus. Perhaps Mr Straw's understandable desire to see the contents of MI5's files on him will speed the necessary review.

## The wind of change

Brand names come and go in the Bonrush of economic change. It is the law of market life that companies die and new ones are born. But it is hard not to sound a note of regret at the demise of certain famous names. One is Boosey & Hawkes, the music company, which is now on the block. How many young instrumentalists have done their daily scales under that rubric? The name became virtually synonymous with amateur wind ensemble playing since, as well as publishing, the company used to be the great British instrument maker. It is the connection with the world of brass and silver bands that is especially going to be missed – no B&H, no *Brassed Off*.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Minister denies volcano isle blunder

Sir: One of the increasing number of myths and misunderstandings that has arisen from the Montserrat crisis is that I am to blame for misreading the scientists' report ("Island declares 'war' on Britain", 25 August).

This is not so. I quoted directly from the report, a publicly available document, which said that the scientists had previously regarded the possibility of a cataclysmic eruption as negligible but could not now rule it out.

Their actual words were: "The remote possibility of the present crisis generating a massively cataclysmic explosive eruption has never been absolutely precluded, but the received wisdom was that it had a negligible probability of occurring. However, the recent increase in explosive activity is such, and the uncertainties attending any hypothesis about the volcano's capacity to go cataclysmic are so great, that the potential hazard cannot be taken to be zero."

This is what I read over to the Press Association news agency, who reported it accurately. Dr Sparks is now suggesting I misquoted him. As you will see, I did not.  
GEORGE FOULKES  
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State  
Department for International Development  
London SW1

Sir: Clare Short's pronouncements on the government and people of Montserrat have been insulting and patronising ("Volcano island gives Short shrift", 25 August).

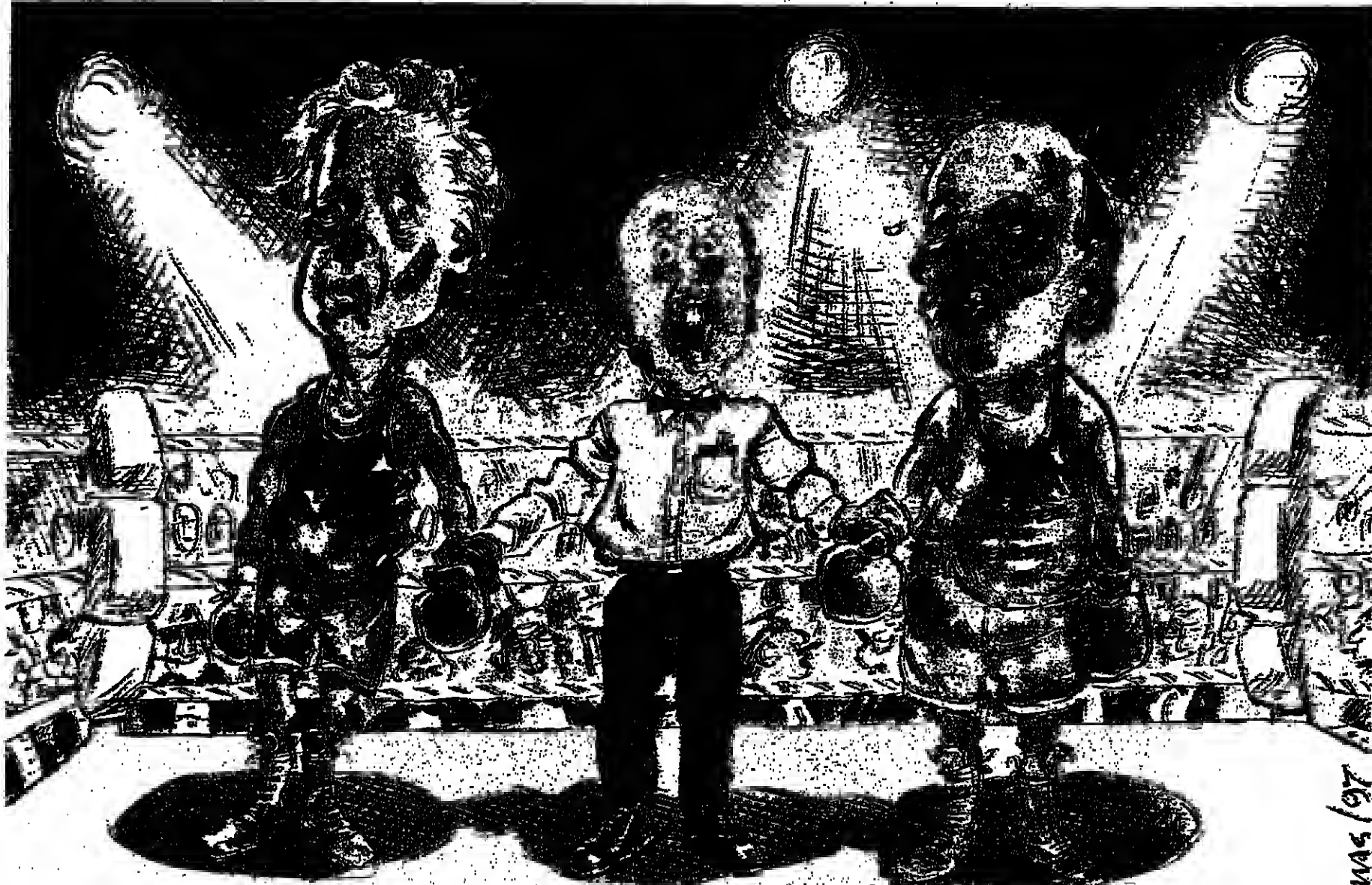
Those who know Montserratians know that they are a proud people, self-reliant and hard-working, proud that we who are the descendants of British slavery, the product of British neglect, have by our own efforts built Montserrat into the thriving community it was before this terrible disaster. We withstand hurricanes, earthquakes, droughts. How dare she, who lives in a country where people complain if the temperature rises above 70 or there is a flake of snow, accuse Montserratians of whingeing?

Britain ruled over us for nearly 400 years. There was little on Montserrat to show for British rule before the advent of universal suffrage for the local people and the formation of a local government. There was no airport, no radio station, no proper electricity – nothing except a few wooden colonial buildings. Montserrat is British, and we expect the same care and consideration that would be applied if there were a nuclear accident in Birmingham.

I visited Montserrat in April this year and found living conditions worse than anything I have seen before. I saw no evidence of substantial funds being employed, no evidence of a cohesive plan for Montserrat.

Britain should declare a state of emergency and assume direct rule. It could then decide whether Montserrat could remain a viable entity with two-thirds of the island, with its most valuable amenities, uninhabitable. If the answer is yes, then the north of the island must be properly developed. The British Government would not be expected to meet all the cost, but they must provide the plan and the infrastructure, and leave the enterprising people to do the rest.

If it is decided that the island is not viable, then the situation must be properly explained to the people. All the inhabitants should



AND THE WINNER IS... THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY!

be given proper British passports which would allow them to come here, in the final analysis. And, yes, a proper assistance package must be worked out to allow the people to get established in their new environment.

The people on Montserrat have lost so much; the last thing they deserve is for someone who represents the "mother country" to burd insults at them as if they were enemies rather than loyal citizens. Perhaps Ms Short should reconsider her position.  
SAM GREENAWAY  
London NW6

The writer is a former general secretary of Mappa, a London-based Montserratian organisation

## Legal gag on green protests

Sir: There is a spectre haunting civil liberties in Britain. It goes by the name of SLAPPs – strategic lawsuits against public participation.

The BP action against Greenpeace is but the latest example of this import from the US. Increasingly, civil injunctions are being used or threatened against individuals and groups involved in legitimate environmental protest. Readers will be aware of the McLibel Two, but many others – local councillors, residents' groups, road protesters, land rights campaigners – are being intimidated to stop them exercising their democratic rights by the prospect of being banned from an area, silenced in public debate, bankrupted by lawyers' costs, and possibly imprisoned.

Often there is no prospect of such litigation coming to full trial.

The litigant company merely satisfies the court that it has a case to argue – nothing has to be proved – and that the balance of convenience justifies the injunction sought. Once the injunction is granted, the case is usually stayed.

The courts and the Legal Aid Board are failing to attribute sufficient weight to the right to express dissent or blow the whistle. Legal aid is rarely available to fight such cases, and the courts invariably favour a developer's commercial convenience over the fundamental rights of the citizen.

Incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights may improve matters, but until it does and the Courts see SLAPPs to be the abuse of the legal process that they are, our justice system will continue to succumb to the same forces that endanger our environment.  
JOHN DUNKLEY  
Solicitor  
EarthRights  
London NW1

## The fate of Jeremy Thorpe

Sir: In her obituary of Henrik van den Bergh, the Apartheid-state's police chief (21 August), Mary Braid writes: "He is believed to have been behind the downfall of the British Liberal Party leader Jeremy Thorpe."

That belief can persist only among extreme conspiracy theorists. Extensive police investigation leading to a well-

publicised trial, along with the much more limited Liberal Party inquiry into one aspect of the affair which I chaired, all pointed to actions by Jeremy Thorpe which led to his downfall, whilst exonerating him of the wider accusations.

There remains, however, no doubt that Jeremy Thorpe's courage and foresight in campaigning against apartheid in the Sixties when both Labour and Conservative front benches were unwilling to face up to what was happening in Southern Africa, must have annoyed van den Bergh's masters.

MICHAEL STEED  
Hon Lecturer in Politics and International Relations  
University of Kent at Canterbury  
The writer was president of the Liberal Party, 1978/9

## How thalidomide scandal broke

Sir: An important truth is omitted in the article "The truth about the greatest campaign ever" (25 August). Without the parliamentary campaign, the efforts of *The Sunday Times* on thalidomide would have sunk in a legal quagmire. Yet Parliament is not mentioned in Phillip Knightley's report.

Harold Evans, the then editor of *The Sunday Times*, later wrote that legal threats from Distillers and the Attorney General were gagging the media. "For the first 23 days of the

campaign we had no coverage at all from the press."

The breakthrough came when I used parliamentary privilege to attack Distillers through questions and an early day motion. The legal gag was stripped away and the media began to report the attack. The major parliamentary debate that followed was described by Evans as "the turning point".

The parliamentary activity transferred discussion of thalidomide from bushy tones in legal chambers to shouted headlines on front pages. It made that controversy a national issue. Once public opinion was aroused, victory was assured.

JACK ASHLEY  
(Lord Ashley of Stoke)  
House of Lords  
London SW1

## Long life down the centuries

Sir: Even a brief promenade around an old graveyard will demonstrate the accuracy of Terry Marshall's point (Letters: "A long life in Victorian times", 22 August). People who managed to survive birth and childhood seem to have developed a habit of not dying.

Thomas Hobbes, around the age of 75, said that his regular games of tennis and long, sweaty walks, always followed by a massage, would make him "live two or three years longer". Twelve years after that, he finished and

published his last book, and he eventually died of a stroke aged 91. (And the Countess of Desmond, we are told, only finally lost that habit of not dying when, at the age of 140, she fell out of an apple tree.)

But in their eyes old age approached faster. Montaigne complimented himself that though "well-stricken in years" his health is still "blithe and lusty", then immediately reminds himself that this cannot last: he is, after all, "engaged dans les avenues de la vieillesse" – his feet are already on the pathways of old age. And how old was he, exactly, at the time? Oh, he tells us that. In his forties.

Poor Montaigne lived to be only 59; but his mother made it to 90, and outlasted him by nearly 10 years.

Dr MICHAEL HALLS  
Christow  
Devon

## Fire-bombs on every aircraft

Sir: How many people realise – surely the aviation authorities must – that every can of hair spray, body perfume or antiperspirant is a potential flame-thrower?

There are warnings on airline tickets about carrying hazardous and flammable substances, such as lighter fluid, yet we all walk round with these cans in our luggage and no one says anything. If you look at the small print on your antiperspirant spray you will see dire warnings about fire.

JILL GALE  
Hampton on Thames  
Middlesex

## No GP deserves these patients

Sir: Jeremy Laurance ("Doctor, doctor, you're not on my wavelength", 20 August) suggests that the IQ of GPs needs to be downgraded to improve the doctor-patient relationship. Far from it. The brightest and best are needed. The skill of the GP lies in picking out, in a seven-to-10-minute consultation, potentially serious pathology from the large amount of trivia that does present in the surgery.

Part of the answer lies in the better preparation of the would-be GP in medical school, where general practice has often been under-emphasised in favour of the more glamorous specialties. Part of the answer, I'm afraid, also lies with the patients. Because GPs are free and accessible 24 hours a day they are sometimes taken for granted.

I have been consulted for a broken fingernail, called out at 2am to settle a baby (because the father did not wish to disturb the baby's mother, who was asleep), called to help somebody get off the toilet, to prescribe medication for a patient's dog (the patient got free NHS prescriptions) and to put eye drops in at midnight – and asked to do one patient's VAT returns.

Add to this increasing violence towards GPs and their staff and tensions begin to develop in the doctor/patient relationship. Is it any wonder that when some of Britain's brightest have experiences like this, they stop and consider what they might expect to receive had they chosen the legal or business sector to train and work in?  
Dr GARETH RICHARDS  
Upper Layham, Suffolk

## It's not cricket – it's the BBC

Sir: I was surprised and pleased to hear from Alistair Lenczner that the BBC devotes "countless hours of prime network time" to cricket coverage (Letter, 23 August), since previously it seemed to be on only during working hours or ludicrously late at night when most people had gone to bed.

I was also amazed to hear that there are "thousands of empty seats regularly seen around the television games". The BBC televises only the one-day cup competitions and Test matches, which are almost always sold out. These empty seats must have featured in the prime-time coverage which I missed.

Sarcasm aside, I fear that if market forces ensure that the BBC cannot afford to show programmes (sports or otherwise) that are worth paying for, then it will end up showing programmes that are worth nothing.  
RICHARD BARNES  
Horsham, West Sussex

## Tales of horror

Sir: May one suggest a few more plots to be included in the horror books for children ("Why young readers turn to little horrors", 25 August)? One would be of an old woman living in the woods who devours young people, while another concerns a wolf eating a grandmother and preying on her granddaughter.

Even better is one about a man with a whistle going round a town kidnapping all the children, but I dare say that would run into trouble with the police.  
ROBERT VINCENT  
Andover, Hampshire

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صلى الله عليه وسلم



## Roll over Gutenberg – tell books the news

At one of the meetings during the Edinburgh Book Festival I was asked to address the question whether CD-Roms, the Internet, electronic media etc. threaten the book.



Andreas Whittam Smith

The Net, with its tens of thousands of sites, is a new wonder of the world

media. It is on its way to something. To see what direction this might be, look at what has been successful so far and seems to be authentically of the medium. E-mail is fast becoming a universal means of communication. An electronic version of the letter post, it is cheap, it is fast, it is global; and it has even engendered a special form of English that is something between that of a letter and a telephone conversation.

On-line retailing of books and records is growing apace. Like many people, I browse book reviews in newspapers and magazines rather than bookshelves in a bookshop. I buy books on the Internet because I can place my order at any moment, because 10 times more titles are available than a bookshop can provide, because I know what I am buying, so there are no issues of quality, and because the prices are good even when postage is added in.

With *Encarta*, Microsoft has shown that the combination of media – multiple data – and the power to manipulate data and to search through it rapidly, brings the encyclopedia to a level which is far superior to what books can achieve. Computer games are the fiction of the new medium; the "shoot-em-ups" are equivalent to pulp fiction, a game like *Myst* is more akin to Tolkien. For the players they are as absorbing as reading a novel.

The Internet itself, with its tens of thousands of web sites, created alike by individuals, by institutions, by corporations, by local and national governments, is a new wonder of the world. It is a vast, global, randomly assembled store of information, growing every day, which can be searched with remarkable facility and at very low cost. It is a world library that will shortly be superior to the American Library of Congress and the British Library combined. And the Internet doesn't employ a single librarian.

These are the successes. Apart from *Encarta*, none of them directly threatens books, newspapers and magazines. History shows that the new media developed during the past century have not obliterated their predecessors as, say, the combined forces of the railway and the motor vehicle extinguished horse-drawn transport. The cinema left the theatre intact. TV did not overwhelm radio. The losses were minor. Music had died; cinema largely gave up encyclopaedias. But the indirect threat is immense.

The book next to the computer screen is an extremely powerful device. The new medium is the most participative of all. And it is effortlessly global. I would guess that 95 per cent of its potential is unrealised. It really is incalculable. But there is a phrase we use which may be more prescient than we realise: we ask whether so-and-so is computer literate or not. Already we equate computers with literacy.



Tuscan romance: but will the mood linger on when Westminster's cruel realities return? Roger Allen

## The holiday's over, now the heat is on

by Fran Abrams

After the holiday, the hang-over. When the Prime Ministerial limo sweeps through the gates of Downing Street after this week after a couple of days' acclimatisation at Chequers, Tony Blair will hardly expect the ecstatic flag-waving that marked his first arrival.

He might reasonably have believed when he left for Tuscany that his reunion with the voters of Britain would be a tender one. Four months into a marriage, it is the least a groom can expect.

Instead, though, he will return to find the Scottish wedding party waging family warfare, the Montserrat contingent complaining loudly that they did not get a big enough slice of the cake, and the mortgage on the marital home threatening to spiral out of control.

Mr Blair's love-affair with the electorate is not over yet, of course, but could the honeymoon be coming to an end?

After the unbounded joy of May, the warm glow of June and the post-Budget self-congratulation of July, August has not been the kindest of months. It never is, of course. In the empty dust-bowl left behind when political heads for the seaside, even the most minor mishap can whip up an eddy of bad publicity or even a full-blown whirlwind. When John Prescott jokingly named a Chinese mitten crab after Peter Mandelson last week, for example, he can hardly have expected front-page headlines in every newspaper.

It has not all been silly season nonsense, though. The suicide of Gordon McMaster and the subsequent suspension of another MP in Paisley, the row over compensation for the volcano-hit West Indian islanders and a fourth rise in interest rates since the election have all done their bit to tarnish the Government's shiny new image.

But if the Prime Minister is tempted to heave a sigh of relief that he was out of the country when the champagne went flat, he should restrain himself. August may have brought a few notes of discord between the Government and its electors, but September just might see

the shedding of the first real tears.

There will be mutterings at the Trades Union Congress about the future of Labour's relations with the unions. The victory celebrations at the party's Brighton conference will be marred by a row over Mr Blair's plans for further modernisation. And there will be the potential for real trouble as voters in Scotland and Wales go to the polls to make their decisions about devolution.

A vote in favour of a Scottish parliament but against the granting of tax-raising powers, for example, would be deeply embarrassing (and very troublesome) for a government that has put its full weight into the campaign for a "yes, yes" vote. And even a narrow victory in Wales would leave behind it the uneasy sensation that a major change is being pushed through without wholehearted public support.

As the autumn drags on, there will be pitfalls aplenty for Mr Blair's new government. Paisley may have seemed like a nasty accident in the middle of August, but it could well become a running sore before Christmas as the extent of corruption in other Scottish Labour Party branches becomes clear. Already the Tories have made capital out of the suspensions of the Govan MP Mohammed Sarwar and the West Wiltshire member Tommy Graham, but there may be more to come when a forthcoming report on Labour in Glasgow is published. Any one of four or five other low-level rows grumbling on across Scotland may easily blow up into a major incident before the year is out.

The economy will also be back to haunt the Government as the nights draw in. There were comforting noises after the summer interest rate rise, to the effect that the situation would now remain stable; but just a couple of weeks later, the hint of yet another hike is being glimpsed on the horizon.

Exports will continue to suffer, and the feel-good factor will not be so abundant in December, when home-owners are facing yet more rises in their mortgage payments. The high-profile millennium pro-

ject may well cause a headache or two, as well. Mr Mandelson's decision last week to spend an extra £8m on the roof of the dome may have passed off relatively quietly, but he is not out of the woods yet. Who will take the flak when the bill for the exhibition begins to enter the stratosphere? Will Mr Blair still be out of the firing-line when public unease turns to real anger?

The dead of winter will see the return of some of those perennial problems from which it was Labour's wont, in opposition, to make capital out of at the expense of the Tories. This year Labour will pay the price when a flu epidemic stretches hospital services to breaking-point and doctors complain that the sick are dying because of a lack of funds. This year it will be the Tories who cash in when teacher redundancies lead to another rise in class sizes, and when schools complain that they still cannot afford to buy the books they need.

There will be other problems, too. The Northern Irish peace process hangs in the balance, and the BSE crisis, which was once the Tories' *bête noire*, could soon become a trial for Labour as thousands of carcasses wait to be incinerated. Students who will be expected to pay £1,000 per year in fees from next year cannot be expected simply to swallow the charge without further protest, and it is conceivable that they will find allies among some of Tony Blair's backbenchers.

Of course there will be no flag-waving crowds in Downing Street this week, not least because most of the party hacks who staged the demonstration last time are still away on their holidays. Tony Blair should not be surprised by any of this. The truth of the matter is that normal politics has been resumed.

When Gerald Ford was elected, he told Congress: "I do not want a honeymoon with you; I want a good marriage." New Labour, on the other hand, chose to go for full-blown, dizzy-headed euphoria. It worked for a while, but nobody ever seriously thought it was going to last. And the bigger the party, the bigger the headache the morning after.

## Answers to life's mysteries? We've got 'em

Today we look at some of the biggest unanswered mysteries of modern times – and we answer them!



Miles Kingston

If Colonel Tom Parker signed Elvis Presley to a contract which diddled the singer out of millions of dollars, and diverted half Presley's fortune Parker's way, what on earth happened to all the money which Colonel Parker got?

Colonel Parker spent a large part of his income on buying and maintaining a huge plantation home near Memphis called Parkland, which to this day has never been open to the public, and which is a shrine to the genius of Colonel Tom Parker. It is full of unsmoked cigars and dollar bills.

If you build more roads, we are told, it only creates more traffic. A road-building programme to relieve traffic congestion tempts more people on to the roads, and so on. But we can all remember that things used to be worse than they are now. There may have been queues on the M25 yesterday, but what about the appalling bank holiday queues that used to form around Exeter before they built the motorway, queues which regularly made the news headlines? Surely there were worse holiday jams 20 years ago? Things do get better, don't they?

I am afraid it is true that more road-building creates more traffic. But the reverse is true as well. Less road-building creates more traffic just as much as more does. The queues on the Exeter bypass of 20 years ago were created by less road-building. Today's queues are created by more road-building. Whenever you do it is going to create more traffic. So clearly less road-building is just as bad as more road-building, but at least it's cheaper.

Why don't we put more money into British athletics and recapture the great triumphs of yesteryear? Another fallacy here, I'm afraid. In the days when Britain had such world-beating runners as Bannister, Brasher, Ibbotson, Chataway and Pirie, nobody put any money into sport at all. Then why don't we put less money into British athletics and recapture the great triumphs of yesteryear again? Couldn't we be the best runners in the world again?

Another fallacy here, I'm afraid. There never was a time when we were the best runners in the world. There was only a time when we had the best five or 10 runners in the world. The rest of the nation was no better at running than it had ever been. The best distance runners today come from Kenya, but do you think the average Kenyan today can run five miles without getting puffed? Or indeed being shot at by the Nairobi police?

Is Radio 4 really being "dumbed down" to make it more downmarket and get the listening figures up? No. What is happening is that the BBC has made an enormous loss on its crazy decision to spend vast sums of money covering the last days of Hong Kong and James Boyce, the new controller of Radio 4, has been under instructions to pay for the Hong Kong fiasco by making radio as cheaply as possible. The cheapest radio of all is that provided by the listeners, and that is why more and more programmes are taking contributions from the listeners themselves – you've probably noticed how PM gives more space to "your letters", how *Feedback* is back again, how *Jazz Record Requests* is getting more space, how *Pick of the Week* now welcomes listeners' tips, and so on.

In what way is the end of the century going to ruin all computer packages? I fail to understand why going from 1999 to 2000 will bring the work of technology to a close. Don't you worry your pretty little head about the reasons why – what is important is how we are going to get round it. Luckily, Peter Mandelson has been heading a secret committee looking into how we can get round the problem, and the solution is one that will appeal to all spin-doctors. We are going to rename the year 2000 and call it AD 1999a, and so on.

If it was so very wrong for all those MPs to accept money from Mohamed Al Fayed, why was there nothing wrong in Mr Fayed giving them the money? Why has he come out of it some sort of hero for stuffing brown envelopes full of money? And what about his son? Is Dodi Al Fayed paying Diana sums of money in envelopes to answer certain questions? And what about his magazine, *Punch*? Why has that fearless satirical organ made no mention of Di and Dodi, which is the biggest story in weeks? I have no idea. It is certainly very curious. I will let you know if I find out.

## When there's just no room at the inn

I was the windows that finished me off. It was, it seemed, the sunniest and most sweltering of recent hot and humid nights. The bed room was like a sauna. And this strongly-sawn wood had been grown into the runnels of all the windows in the room so that they could not be opened beyond a mere three inches.

This was not some dive in a seedy light district designed to keep the raggers out or the clients in. It was Bilton's poshest, the Palace Hotel, lately Victorian Gormenghast on top of the hill overlooking the spa town at the heart of the Derbyshire Peak District. I rang reception.

"Someone seems to have screwed up my windows," I said. "Ah yes," said the abashed voice at the other end. "It's health and safety. All the windows have been sealed shut for health and safety."

What was the nature of their risk assessment, I wondered. Did I look suicidal? Or a likely victim of venery? So far as health and safety were concerned, wasn't it more likely, I suggested, that I would collapse from heat exhaustion? "Can I be moved to another room?" No, said the voice, because it wasn't just the third floor which had been done; the third floor had been secured on all doors.

Just get room service to send up screwdriver then and I'll do them myself. Sorry, only would not be able to do that and they would not be until the morning. I harrumphed, ignoring the notice about the safeguarding of valuables, propped open the bedroom door with a chair, and fell into a fitful sleep.

I was fed up with hotels, I decided the next day, as I descended from the Derbyshire hills to the flat.

scarred industrial landscape of South and then West Yorkshire. From now on I would just stay in B&Bs. I was bound for a working-class community in Knottingley and would lodge in a pre-war travel agency on the road to Wigan Pier, with the plain people of England. It seemed like a good idea at the time.

With the change of scenery, a change to the quality of life became apparent. The sign at Castleford may have said "historic Roman settlement" and Pontefract may once have boasted the highest castle in Yorkshire but they were distinguished now by branches of Netto and Kwiksave. Signs read "Cheques cashed – cheapest rates locally." One hostelry bore the legend "Starving Sam's – mighty meals from £1.55". At one bus-stop a woman was arguing with the driver over the 70p maximum off-peak fare.

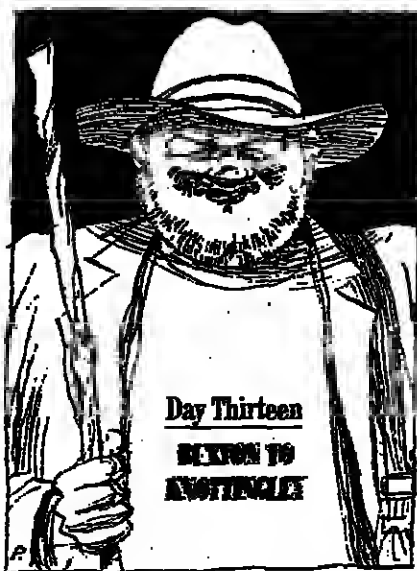
"This bus is supposed to go straight through to Knottingley." "Well, it doesn't. You'll have to change at Cas."

"But then I'll have to pay twice. That'll cost me £1.40."

When I arrived in Knottingley there were no rooms left at the Golden Lion, the pub which had been recommended. So I walked along the canal to a B&B I had been told of. It was full, too. So was the town. My bag and computer were getting heavy now. There was no room at the Sun Inn, either. "There's a big contract on at the power station down Ferrybridge," the landlord said. He rang Jackie at the Anvil. "She can fit you in, but you'll have to share." Sharing! How Orwellian!

Jackie showed me to the room.

## A JOURNEY AROUND THE WHOLE ISLAND OF GREAT BRITAIN



WITH PAUL VALLELY

There were two beds, piled with duvets and soiled clothing. "I'll put a third bed in the corner," she said. Desperate to deposit my bags, I agreed. It was an odd place. The bare floorboards were speckled with paint, the wallpaper was torn and the light-bulb bare. But there were dried flowers on the old sewing machine treadle and on the mantelpiece, despite the Chris de Burgh tapes, was AJ Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic*, a volume on Krishna and the Bhagavatam and a primer entitled *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*.

It was late when I returned. In the bar a grotesquely fat drunk called Larry – with herring head, bulging neck and rolling eyes – was losing on the pool table, and to a woman. He cursed with astonishing frequency, not merely between words but between syllables. "Larry, don't call the customers bitches," admonished the barmaid, bizarrely picking on the mildest of his insults. Periodically Larry offered to fight anyone in the room. He leered aggressively up to me and put his nose two inches from mine. Just then, another drunk who claimed to be the husband of the pool-table woman, intervened.

I had ordered a pint of beer. Where, I wondered, was the safest place to drink it. "Do you mind if I join you?" I said to the two men at the table furthest from the pool table.

"Yes, we do actually," one said. I had already sat down and, hoping that this was what passed for badinage locally, I decided to ignore it. The objector, who was also spectacularly drunk, began to tell me how he was a taxi driver who had just been snapped by a speed camera

doing 140mph on the M62. "D'yer think I give a huggin'?" he asked. I assured him that I did not.

Deciding that discretion was the better part of Valley I downed the beer and made my way up the dingy staircase hoping that none of the drinkers would turn out to be my room-mates. I was asleep two hours later when my sleeping companions eventually arrived and flooded the room with light. They were, thankfully, none of the above, but they were rather menacing Welsh labourers who were just as inebriated and almost as aggressive.

"Can we have the radio off, lads," I asked when they finally crashed, belching, into bed and switched off the light.

"No, f-k off," one said.

"That was good beer," burped the other. "And 95p a pint."

"Better than last night's – that was corky, know what I mean, corky?" When they were asleep I rose apprehensively to turn off their insane late-night phone-in. It was a difficult operation in the dark. I did not know which was the off switch and the owner might easily have woken up and thumped me. Violence, I philosophised, is a part of working-class culture that the middle classes construct edifices of privilege and law to avoid. But if the edifices had crumbled, I reasoned, I had the advantage of being awake and comparatively sober. The Welsh yobs slumbered on.

They were asleep still when, at 6.30am, I rose, dressed and silently left. On the dressing table by the stairs I left the requisite £10 for the sleeping landlady. Hotels, I decided, were not so bad after all.

Tomorrow: Knottingley.

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## Threat of rise in German rates grows

Clifford German

The prospect of a rise in German interest rates increased yesterday after provisional figures suggested German inflation had risen to 2 per cent over the 12 months to August, the first time it had reached the 2 per cent threshold since April 1995.

The increase from 1.7 per cent in the year to July was announced by the Federal Statistics Office, based on provisional figures from four German states. If the new figure is confirmed when full figures are released next month it lifts the inflation rate up to the Bundesbank's target rate.

Capital investment and construction activity remain depressed and unemployment is still high, but the Bundesbank also revised German industrial output figures for June upwards yesterday from 1.4 per cent to 3 per cent, while the International Monetary Fund confirmed forecasts for a buoyant German economy, with growth reaching 2.3 per cent this year and 2.6 per cent next year.

The IMF also said the German government's budget deficit would be 3.1 per cent of gross domestic product this year and could even meet the 3.0 per cent target to qualify for membership of the single European currency.

The majority of dealers and analysts still expect the Bundesbank to delay a response to the figures, especially because Chancellor Helmut Kohl is due to meet the French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin in Bonn on Thursday, the first of a series of ministerial meetings over the next month which will set the tone for progress towards

monetary union in 1999.

French finance minister Dominique Strauss-Kahn warned yesterday of an adverse effect on the French government's economic growth target and the French government's attempts to qualify for membership of the European single currency if US or German interest rates rise. As long as they do not raise rates the French economy could expect healthy growth of between 2.9 per cent and 3 per cent next year.

A precautionary rise in German interest rates could however be signalled as early as today when the Bundesbank sets its weekly repo rate at which it will make funds available to the money markets. The rate has been unchanged at 3 per cent for more than a year.

The German stock market shrugged off comments by Chancellor Kohl that he has no intention of reshuffling his cabinet in spite of calls from his coalition partners the CSU for an extra seat to compensate them for the abolition of the ministry of telecommunications later this year.

But anticipating a rise in German interest rates, the dollar fell below 1.82 marks yesterday and German shares failed to recover from Friday's 4 per cent fall. Most shares ended lower in late trading, led by the leading bank shares. Dresdner Bank closed down 3.10 at 73.60 marks.

Elsewhere in Europe trading was generally subdued but stock markets were torn between fears of a rise in German interest rates and optimism inspired by the continuing strength of shares on Wall Street.

The Paris Bourse lost initial gains of around 1 per cent and the CAC-40 index closed 5.66 lower at 2,898.57 because of worries about the knock-on effects of higher German interest rates. Banks and financial stocks were worst affected.

Car stocks Peugeot and Renault both rallied however, after the French finance minister said a tax on diesel fuel would only be justified if it applied in all EU countries. The shares had fallen last week on fears that the French government would unilaterally apply a tax on diesel fuel to limit pollution. Thomson-CSF and Dassault Aviation continued gains made last Friday after the defence minister confirmed decisions on the future of the two companies would be announced next month.

Swiss shares also closed lower, and the Dutch market lost most of its early gains because of the signals from Germany. But the Italian market still ended the day higher, following the strength of Wall Street.

Shares in New York shrugged off initial losses and the Dow Jones index was almost 60 points higher by mid-morning before suffering a fresh downturn which reduced the gains to 15 points by midday. The market is now waiting for news of US durable goods orders and US consumer confidence figures for July, both due today.

Earlier the Tokyo market was flat but Hong Kong posted gains of around 1 per cent as fears of a run on the currency subsided and the H share index of Chinese stocks rose sharply. Shares in Australia also gained ground, led by gold stocks.



A good read: (from left) Philip Joseph, Christine Bachelor, Richard Joseph, Russell Barclay and John Monk of Books etc. Photograph: Tobias Harvey

John Willcock

Books etc, an independent book store chain based in the South-east, plans to come to the market this autumn to fund acquisitions and a near-doubling of its 20-store network by 2001.

Richard Joseph, who founded Books etc with his father Philip Joseph in 1981, said yesterday the full listing would raise £5m-£7m in new money and value the business at £30m-£40m. "We believe there is a lot more consolidation to come in the book-selling business, and the flotation will give us the ability to make acquisitions when the opportunities arise," Mr Joseph said.

He will become chairman and chief executive of the company while Nigel Whittaker, a former director of Kingfisher, will become non-executive

## Flotation to open a new chapter for Books etc

deputy chairman. The placing to institutions will also enable the company to expand further outside the South-east where its 20 stores are concentrated. Mr Joseph aims to open 14 more shops over the next four years including stores in Manchester and Edinburgh.

In the year to 31 January 1997 the company made a pre-tax profit of £2.2m on turnover of £31.5m. Mr Joseph is confident the company can pursue rapid growth. "We have a good name in London, and we have invested a lot in systems and

people," he says. He points out that the UK book market is worth around £3.2bn and is forecast to grow at 5 per cent a year for the foreseeable future. Independent retail chains account for 21 per cent of the market.

Charterhouse Tilney Securities has been appointed sponsor and stockbroker to the float. Mark Sebba, a former director of Charterhouse bank and finance director of Golden Rose Communications, will also join the board as a non-executive director.

Selling books runs in the family, according to Mr Joseph. His father Philip used to run Exclusive Books, a shop chain in South Africa which is still going strong. Joseph senior will retire as chairman of Books etc following the float and will become a non-executive director.

The company prides itself on being innovative, says Mr Joseph. He claims it was one of the first UK booksellers to adopt a "lifestyle retailing concept" into its stores. This included introducing coffee shops

in 1994 as well as extended browsing areas and a "money-back guarantee". He says Books etc was also the first specialist chain to identify the potential of airports for successful book selling. The group operates three airport stores.

Ten years ago Hambro Group Investments took a 30 per cent stake to help the business grow. Under the flotation plan John May, managing director of Hambro Group Investments, will join the board as a non-executive director.

Mr Joseph dismisses the threat of competition from Internet-based book sellers, a number of which have been launched and floated recently. "Most people who buy books want to see and feel them and read a chapter first before they buy them."

## Property sales set to boost BG profits by £100m

Chris Godsmark  
Business Correspondent

BG, the former British Gas, is set to boost its profits by revealing property sales worth more than £100m in its next set of results next month, fuelling speculation that the company may be on the verge of a share buy-back worth up to £2bn.

Managers in the group's property division have used the

booming property market to sell some of the 1,100 sites under management, about 800 of which were former contaminated gas works or depots. Centrica, the demerged British Gas supply business, inherited a further 300 sites when the two sides of the old company split earlier this year. The British Gas property portfolio has already fallen from 2,000 sites in 1994. Since the start of this year BG

has made several high-profile sales of London office buildings as the group's workforce shrunk. One building in Marble Arch in London's West End, raised £19m, while two more office blocks in Holborn, close to the City of London, raised another £25m.

Company sources said BG would have sold around 200 smaller sites outside the capital by the end of June.

BG pointed out that the cash made by selling most contaminated gas works sites was offset by the cost of cleaning them. BG is required to undertake statutory decontamination work before any sale. However, the impact on BG's overall profits is less because the clean-up effort is largely covered by an existing £400m provision in its accounts.

"The property market is do-

ing well at the moment and we're taking advantage of it. But it's not fair to take a snapshot of the situation at any particular point in time. You can't look at the money raised without looking at the costs," a source said.

Though the benefit from London property sales has mostly been completed, there is expected to be a further boost in the second half of this year

from gas works sites sold to supermarket chains.

Analysts last week said the property sales were one of the reasons for the recent rise in BG's share price, with NatWest Securities raising their forecast for the shares to 280p. They closed on Friday up 3.5p in falling stock market to 263.5p. BG is considering making share buy-backs in a move to raise its borrowings. Analysts

predicted they could total up to £2bn, though the move would prove controversial, with customers and the industry watchdog, Ofgas.

The company had fought Ofgas's plans to slash its pipeline charges, claiming they represented the "biggest smash and grab raid ever". But BG accepted the proposals after a Monopolies and Mergers Commission investigation.

## Greenalls to give pub grub a lift

Andrew Yates

Pub grub is about to be transformed under plans being hatched by Greenalls, one of Britain's largest pub groups.

Gone are the days of cold sandwiches and cold sausages. Soon Greenalls' customers will be able to order a bowl of oysters or a plate of smoked salmon, washed down by an expensive bottle of Chateau, in pubs all around the country.

Greenalls plans to launch a range of new dishes, including fish platters and a host of vegetarian meals. It is even developing new technology designed to cook a range of fresh vegetables quickly and cheaply.

The dishes will typically cost around £10 each. Greenalls will also offer a range of wine from Australia, South Africa and California costing from £7 to £15 a bottle.

Lord Daresbury, Greenalls' chief executive, wants to take the chain upmarket to attract more affluent customers. "People used to come to pub just at lunch time but now they are coming for supper. This is about offering customer good food at good value in a casual atmosphere. It is aimed at increasing spend per head getting them to stay longer and spend more on food and have a glass of wine or even a bottle," he said.

Greenalls plans to introduce its new menu in at least half of its 850-strong pub chain over the next 18 months. It is spending £100m to revamp its pubs, about a third of which will be used to create its new culinary delights.

The group has also unveiled plans to build a huge leisure club at The Belfry, its famous Midlands golf course, which will house 3,000 members. The existing leisure club will be turned into a 300-room conference centre. The scheme is part of a £9m investment programme designed to take The Belfry into the new millennium.

Greenalls has opened a new PGA golf course when the development is completed it will house a 360-bedroom hotel, five restaurants, three conference centres and eight bars.

## Monitor pays Willetts £25,000 for day a month

John Willcock

David Willetts, MP for Havant, who resigned as Paymaster General last December, has been appointed an adviser to Monitor Company, an American management consultancy.

Mr Willetts will be paid £25,000 a year by Monitor for around half-a-day's work a fortnight, he said yesterday. He will add to his other part-time post that he gained in June, that of economic adviser to Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, the German-owned investment bank.

Monitor was founded in Boston in 1983 by graduates of Harvard Business School, and most of the firm's 800 staff are still based in that city, with 100 in London.

Richard Rawlinson, a spokesman for Monitor, said: "We advise mostly large multi-national companies on competitiveness issues. We see Mr Willetts helping us on the organisational parallels between governments and businesses. It will basically be a research job. He will also sit on



David Willetts: "They seem to be very sophisticated"

Monitor's Eurasian Board of Advisers."

Mr Willetts said: "They approached me, and they seemed to be very sophisticated analysts of business strategy. I hope to be working with specific clients, but it's early days."

Mr Willetts quit as a minister last autumn immediately after the publication of a report in which he was sharply criticised by the Tory-dominated Standards and Privileges Committee which examined the allegation that he attempted to subvert a parliamentary inquiry into the Neil Hamilton "cash-for-questions" affair.

Mr Rawlinson said the fact that Mr Willetts had resigned from the previous government had not affected Monitor's attitude to him: "We're interested in his intellectual qualities. He's respected as one of the best thinkers around today."

Mr Willetts is also a former Whip who has had a considerable influence over strategic policy-making in the Conservative party over the last 10 years. He was consultant director of the Conservative Research Department from 1987 to 1992.

A graduate of Christ Church, Oxford, he began his career in the civil service and was a Treasury official from 1978 to 1984. He went on to become a member of the Downing Street Policy Unit for two years. Then, for five years, he directed the Centre for Policy Studies.

## Euro will go ahead on time, say economists

The European single currency will go ahead on schedule on 1 January 1999 with a broad membership, according to a survey of 12 eminent economists carried out by the European Movement (EM), writes John Willcock. A majority of those polled expect the currency to be broadly successful.

None of the panellists expect the UK to join EMU in the first wave, however. The panel of economists includes Patrick Minford, Professor of Economics at Liverpool University, and Tim Congdon, director of Lombard Street Research.

The EM is a cross-party pressure group with Sir Edward Heath as its president and Peter Mandelson as one of its vice-chairmen. It said yesterday that it would publish its economists' panel survey each quarter "as a contribution to the EMU debate."

The balance of the panel at the moment expects monetary union to be broadly successful. Two of the economists see this success as unqualified, whilst others list factors such as the operation of the stability pact

and the approach of the European Central Bank as crucial to the success or failure of EMU. Those who believe that EMU will be a success cite low interest rates, low unemployment and low inflation as benefits of a single currency.

Fears of the euro's failure focus on the reduction of monetary flexibility and the risk that the European Central Bank will set interest rates too high.

Most of the panellists expect membership of EMU to be broad, with between nine and 13 countries joining.

Stephen Woodard, director of the EM, said: "The single currency debate in this country has suffered from too much ill-informed speculation and too little fact. But if Britain is to make up its mind on this crucial issue, it must be discussed in an informed way, free from prejudice and hype."

The euro was unlikely to be the disaster area its opponents predicted, Mr Woodard added. "The single currency is going to happen - in or out, Britain has to be ready."

## A job worth £313 a week that goes unnoticed

John Willcock

Women on average think that their families rate the work they do around the home only just above "seven out of ten", while they agree with men that the cost of paying someone to do the housework would usually amount to £313 a week.

According to Legal & General's "Value of a Mum" report published yesterday, most women also think that if they

stopped doing some of the housework, their partners "wouldn't notice at all."

However, an almost equal number, 17 per cent, think their partners would spot the difference immediately.

Legal & General launched the survey to find out the relative time put in by women and men in running their households, and to publicise the need for financial protection for women as well as men. The report also found that

Margaret Meldrew, the long-suffering wife of cantankerous Victor in BBC's *One Foot in the Grave* series, is Britain's favourite TV housewife.

Mrs Meldrew polled the highest number of votes from both men and women in the survey. Among women only, Coronation Street's Sally Webster, currently coping with the demands of raising a family and husband Kevin's infidelity, is hailed as the most admired housewife.

At the other end of the scale, however, housewife megastar Dame Edna Everage gets the thumbs down as the least popular figure among both men and women. Only just above Dame Edna are *Eastenders*' Pauline Fowler and Sybil Fawley, wife of anarchic Basil.

Other TV housewife heroines include the Oxo Mum and Mrs Merton.

Peter Telford, head of life assurance at Legal & General,

claimed there was a serious point to the report. "In this supposed age of equality it still seems women are worse off when it comes to being financially protected. Women have less than two-thirds of the life assurance held by men, yet they still take on the lion's share of the family responsibilities."

Couples need to consider carefully how the family would cope if one partner, particularly the woman, wasn't around," he said.

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## No landing in sight for UK's flying economy



KEVIN GARDINER

The strong pound is perhaps the most visible threat to growth ... however, manufacturers are in better financial shape than at any time since the Sixties, and their order books are holding at above-trend levels

Not sooner has it become clear that the economy has been growing solidly than the "hard landing/soft landing" debate has begun. This seems premature, and no doubt reflects partly the understandable sense of shock felt by some commentators who have only just realised that the economy can fly at all. The City is assuming that growth will slow noticeably during the second half of the year and into 1998. But on our reading, growth may not have peaked, and a landing of any sort is not yet in prospect. This is potentially bad news for interest rates – but not necessarily for the stock market.

The strong pound is perhaps the most visible threat to growth. The current episode is now the second-biggest competitive squeeze in the entire post-war period. However, manufacturers are in better financial shape than at any time since the Sixties, and their order books are holding at above-trend levels, with weak export orders offset by buoyancy in the much more important home market (a source of support conspicuously missing from the increasingly-cited but much more severe 1977-1981 episode). Many models would suggest that with the world economy growing robustly, aggregate exports can withstand the strong pound.

Fiscal policy might yet cool things down. But the Budget tax increases were mostly levied on income which would have been saved, and the package was effectively neutral. The City consensus is loudly and perversely in favour of more fiscal tightening,

and Gordon Brown might yet take more decisive action; but a spring Budget could be seven months away – and in my view the Chancellor got it right the first time around. Mr Brown has an opportunity denied to previous Labour Chancellors – to copy his US and German counterparts, and let an independent central bank do his cyclical worrying for him. The Bank of England will not find life easy, but that's their problem.

Mortgage rates have risen noticeably since early May. But rates are rising from low levels, and will take a while to have an effect – not least because one in every two borrowers has an annually reviewed or fixed-rate mortgage.

Most households don't have a mortgage anyway. Indeed, for many, the net effect of the last year's policy mix remains positive: the stronger exchange rate has supported real pay, while the booming service sector has created more jobs in the last three months than the manufacturing sector has done in the last three years – a point, which should reinforce Mr Brown in his determination to remain above the immediate debate.

The main building society demutualisations are behind us. But the effect of the windfalls from spending is unlikely to have been fully recorded yet – not least because a holiday, an R-registration car and a bumper Christ-

mas are three potential candidates for windfall-supported expenditure.

The windfalls may in any case be simply the icing on a very large cake. The average household's disposable income is growing. Consumers are being reassured by falling unemployment, and are backed by a historically high savings ratio and a strong balance sheet – as nervous monetarists will increasingly testify. Confidence was rising when the windfalls were just twinkles in the carpetbaggers' eyes, as was evident from the steady rise in credit usage. And some consumers will have seen their finances transformed: a statistical guinea pig we've been tracking has seen their real post-tax and mortgage spending power double since 1990, to stand two-fifths above the peak of the previous boom in mid-1988. Spending

may still be gathering momentum, supermarket style.

If growth does remain strong during the second half of the year, the Bank of England is unlikely to leave interest rates on hold for long. The "new paradigm" school argues that inflation risk these days is negligible, and that strong growth can continue indefinitely without pulling prices up. But the Bank is right to be sceptical.

Inflation risk is visible now. The trade-weighted exchange rate has risen by roughly a quarter, but the impact on retail prices has been smaller than expected, mostly because overseas suppliers and domestic distributors of imports have made the most of the opportunity to widen their profit margins. Anybody seen cheaper German cars, or package holidays? Even manufacturers are reluctant to pass on weak costs, despite intensified competitive pressure: margins on their domestic sales are probably widening as a result, offsetting the impact of the inevitable squeeze on export margins.

Retailers and manufacturers are not exactly shouting this from the rooftops. Indeed, they are much more likely to be heard proclaiming the absence of pricing power. But while they may not be able to raise prices as much as they would like, aggregate price/cost ratios have been stronger than at the same stage of the previous

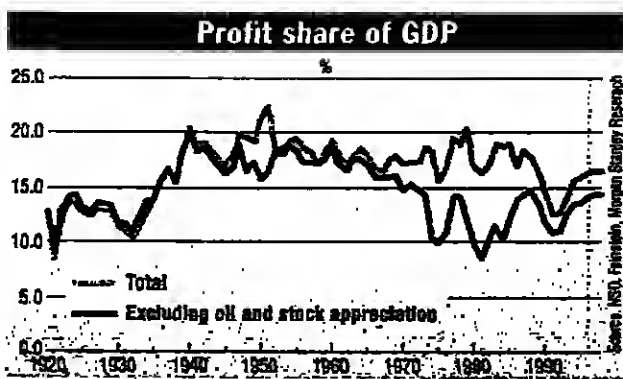
cycle. If the economy remains buoyant and costs stop falling, prices – not margins – could be the sufferer.

Some inflation risk is also visible in the labour market. Wages have been remarkably well-behaved by comparison with the previous cycle. However, they look less restrained after adjusting for inflation, and much less so when measured net of taxes and mortgage rates. And there is less slack in the market than at any time in recent memory.

The official inflation target is a tough one – it has been hit in just one month in the last 30. And unless monetary conditions tighten further, it could remain elusive. Official interest rates have risen by a full percentage point since early May. They could rise by as much again and still look unremarkable.

This seems to augur badly for the stock market. But you don't need to believe that inflation is dead and that interest rates have stopped rising to make sense of the market's recent rise. Solid growth in domestic turnover, together with faster margins, could push corporate profitability up further. Almost unnoticed, the share of profits in GDP is approaching its highest levels for a generation. And as the chart shows, it is the intervening quarter-century which looks anomalous. Not so much a "new paradigm" as a forgotten one.

Kevin Gardiner is a senior economist at Morgan Stanley Dean Witter: the views expressed are his own.



## Millennium bomb could trigger bank crisis



Jon Moynihan on how computer failure could create huge liquidity problems – and give gold a boost

It has been called the millennium bomb, the year 2000 problem and the 00 issue, yet it could equally be described as a many-tentacled octopus, or many-headed hydra, because its threats come in such a variety of forms.

Some threats are real; others are, or might turn out to be, imaginary. Separating real from imaginary is important because what has already been established is that not enough computer programmers exist in the world to check, in time, all the potentially compromised software. Some 60 events are already occurring, as with the 104-year-olds who are this year receiving letters summoning them to primary school.

What kind of disaster can be triggered by a computer's failure to distinguish between, say, 1900 and 2000? First, it is important to understand that it's not just lines of software that are potentially compromised.

Back in the 1970s when computer chips were created, lines of code, written in languages such as Cobol, now seen as simplistic, were hard-wired bodily into computer chip circuitry.

Because, to save significant amounts of programming, the Cobol or other programmers would in many instances have left off the first two digits of a year, that same lacuna would often have been translated straight into the chip.

Thus, not only computer code, but also some computer chips, are potentially compromised.

Many companies will be

comfortable that for the large majority of their software and chips, there is no year 2000 problem. However, the degree of confidence will not always be absolute.

For example, it might take a certain amount of *sang froid* to board one of those flights they are currently advertising which will, they say, fly you through time zones into the millennium at midnight on 31 December 1999.

Will the plane definitely keep flying as midnight arrives? How bad can it get?

There is feverish activity behind the scenes to try to ensure we avoid any of the catastrophic scenarios that have been identified. However, new threats continue to emerge. Here's a reasonably plausible one: the great banking liquidity lock-up of 1999.

The payment systems of banks around the world utilise millions of lines of computer code. Every day, thousands of billions of dollars pass through these payment systems, from bank to bank, from bank to customer, and on through to other customers.

If on 1 January 2000, the software employed by a bank to mediate these payments fails to recognise the date, and therefore fails to make one or all payments that day, those involved in those transactions don't get the money they were expecting.

It needs only a small number of banks to have an 00 problem in their software for a significant number of payments not to be made.



The queue at the bank. Will it end up stretching round the block in the great liquidity crisis of 1999?

In the interbank money transfer system, a failure to transmit somewhere between 5 to 10 per cent of daily payments would quite possibly be enough to lock up the entire system – if you haven't paid me, I can't pay him.

Doubtless, all banks are striving hard to bave this problem solved before 31 December. But many have not yet tested the robustness of their payments software to be entirely sure.

International payments systems are so intertwined that the problem could be precipitated by banks not in the developed world – where many have not yet examined their payments system software – but by those in lesser developed countries where resources to investigate such problems are very scarce, or even less than none.

The problem extends beyond banks, to the companies with payment systems tied to banks, which themselves are responsible for large liquidity flows into and out of the banking system.

How many of these will fail to sort out their software in time? How many need to fail before the banking system locks up and a systemic

liquidity crisis is created? How prepared will businesses be, in the run-up during 1998 and 1999, to take a chance on the fact that there won't be a liquidity crisis?

The question has pertinence because any company or indeed individual who decides that there could be a problem on 1 January 2000 would be most likely to react to such a problem by creating, and hoarding, liquidity for themselves.

In other words, companies and individuals concerned about this problem will start to amass cash and other liquid instruments against the potential of a short-term or even long-term systemic liquidity crisis.

If that were so, then we are back to the problem that if only 5-10 per cent of assets are liquidated – or withdrawn from the system and placed in cash, gold or whatever – there will again be the potential for a liquidity crisis.

At that stage, central banks will be faced with the decision whether to flood the system with liquidity (thus potentially threatening a wave of inflation and economic dislocation), or to let the affected banks fail. Even this solution may not

be available to them if the liquidity crisis gathers speed very quickly. And even with such actions, commerce could be crippled for days, weeks or even months.

As with all liquidity crises, the threat could be self-fulfilling. Fears that it could happen could ensure that it does.

Anyone believing that a liquidity crisis could occur will want to pop out and buy their gold coins before everyone else does.

As the price of gold goes up – possibly to astronomical levels – and local liquidity scares occur, the lines round the bank at bank opening time start swelling.

The great liquidity crisis of 1999? Impossible, you may say. However, there is nothing particularly outlandish in the scenario outlined above, which is made all the more feasible by the enormous reliance payments systems in the 1990s now place on their computer software. The scenario may, or may not, happen.

What should be done? Preventative measures could be taken.

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority has made it a requirement for all banks under its supervision to have a mil-

lennium compliance programme in place by the end of June 1997, guaranteeing that they will have identified and sorted out all problems by the time 2000 arrives. Similar requirements have yet to be seen in other banking jurisdictions.

Companies, unlike banks, do not face any statutory requirement. Certification of millennium-worthiness, similar say to ISO-9000 certification or an S&P credit rating, has not yet emerged and is an option – but one that would have to be developed soon.

Banks and big corporations themselves should pay particular attention to their payments software and hardware in the run-up to the millennium. And for those who subscribe to disaster scenarios – perhaps a small punt on the price of gold?

Jon Moynihan is group chief executive of PA Consulting Group.

PA, in association with Taskforce 2000 and the OTI, produced the report, *Defusing the Millennium Bomb*, which tracks the progress of UK companies to achieving Millennium compliance. Copies can be obtained from Clare Fortune on 071-333-3367

### IN BRIEF

#### Demand for gold up 11 per cent

Demand for gold reached 723 tonnes in the second quarter of the year, up 11 per cent on the same time last year according to the World Gold Council. The gold price fell to its lowest level in 12 years last month after the Australian central bank sold 167 tonnes from its reserves, and gold producers are continuing to depress the price by selling a high proportion of their output on the forward market ahead of actual production times. But European central banks have not followed Australia's lead and this month's currency crisis in Thailand, Indonesia and other Southeast Asian economies has not triggered significant sales by investors, the WGC's research manager George Milling-Stanley said in Sydney yesterday.

#### Turnover in Cliveden shares soars

Turnover in the shares of Cliveden Group, owners of the stately home turned hotel which will be forever associated with the Astors, John Profumo and Christine Keeler, soared to 234,000 last Friday, many times the normal daily trading volume, as rumours of a takeover bid by the wealthy Saudi prince Al-Waleed bin Talal did the rounds again. An identical rumour in February pushed the shares up to an all-time high of 99.5p but they have fallen back to around 60p recently in spite of a rights issue at 75p which raised £8m in April to reduce debt and finance expansion. Last week the group also warned that planning delays would have an adverse impact on results for the current year.

#### £41m Holocaust payment clears hurdle

The Swiss National Bank's Sfr100m (£41.5m) contribution to Switzerland's Holocaust fund will not need parliamentary approval, a parliamentary legal affairs committee decided yesterday. The decision could speed the payment, since the parliament might have had to hold a referendum on the issue. "It is easier and less bureaucratic and more sensible to leave the decision up to the board of the central bank rather than issue a federal ruling," committee chairman Lili Nabholz said after members of the body decided by 12 votes to five that the current legal framework is sufficient to allow the central bank to make the contribution.

#### Portuguese football club to float

The Portuguese soccer club Benfica is preparing to float shares on the London and Lisbon stock markets according to the Portuguese journal *Diário Económico*. Finbanc and Salomon Brothers will handle the float. Members and their associates will retain a majority of shares.

#### Florida to get \$11bn in tobacco deal

The state of Florida will receive \$11.3bn from the tobacco industry to settle the state's medical bills for smokers according to a report from West Palm Beach. The settlement would exclude Florida from the national agreement between US states and the tobacco industry earlier this year, but would produce a payment three or four years ahead of the national agreement, according to a spokesman for Philip Morris.

#### Entrepreneur close to profit

Entrepreneur, the pub company jointly owned by Grand Metropolitan and Foster's, the Australian brewer, is close to making a profit. Ted Kunkel, chief executive of Foster's, said in Melbourne yesterday. Foster's plans to sell a third of its US and Australian properties but will retain its 40 per cent stake in Molson, the Canadian brewer.

#### Chinese contract for GEC-Alsthom

The China Yangtze Three Gorges Development Corporation has confirmed the award of contracts for eight turbines and alternators worth \$420m to GEC-Alsthom and ABB of Switzerland, and for six turbines and generators worth \$320m to a consortium of Voith Siemens and General Electric's Canadian operation.

#### Siemens and HP in telecoms link

Siemens and Hewlett-Packard have signed a memorandum of understanding between their telecommunications divisions jointly to develop and market telecoms management networks world-wide, according to a joint statement issued in Munich yesterday.

## Diversifying away from the white, male, middle-aged manager

Computer giant Hewlett-Packard believes discrimination adds up to a waste of talent. Roger Trapp reports

Early next month, Lew Platt, president and chief executive of Hewlett-Packard, will visit the California-based computer and office equipment company's UK headquarters at Bracknell, Berkshire, to present three out of only five quality awards that he is making in the world this year.

With such a clear recognition of the British business's contribution to the continuing success of a group that last year achieved worldwide revenues of \$38.4bn, it might be understandable if it just basked in the glory.

But Mr Platt will find an operation in the midst of a transformation that John Golding, UK chairman and managing director, is convinced will effect the com-

pany's "very survival". The initiative in question revolves around the quest for diversity – a concept that has increasingly preoccupied managers and consultants as a result primarily of demographic changes that are putting more women and ethnic minorities into the workforce.

Concern about discrimination by race or sex has dogged companies for the past couple of decades at least, but Alison McDermott, one of the executives leading the programme, stresses

that, while earlier efforts were morally or legally motivated, the current push results from business need.

Companies are realising that by excluding certain people or barring them from promotion they risk missing opportunities and not making the best use of the talents at their disposal.

Many observers might be surprised to hear that this is seen as a problem for Hewlett-Packard – which is as well known for the management principles espoused in

"The HP Way" as for the sustained performance over the half-century since it was founded in a garage in what is now California's Silicon Valley.

But a review of the organisation recently carried out by occupational psychologists Pearn Kaudola as part of the first stage of the diversity programme revealed hitherto unrealised problems.

Women, in particular, felt left out by a company that, according to one respondent, held meetings at "silly times" and was inflexible about fam-

ily needs. It was even felt that the culture encouraged by the HP Way subconsciously created "HP clones".

Mr Golding – one of a group of senior executives to have gone through a training programme that followed the audit – has become "evangelical" about the issue to the point of saying that he is deeply worried that every member of the European management team is like him – middle-aged, white, Anglo-Saxon and male. Consequently, when it came to gaining different points of view and opinions all bar one must be redundant.

Emphasising that the programme – which has already been under way in the United States for some time

– will become as central and all-pervasive as quality has become over the years, Ms McDermott says that great efforts are being made to impress on staff that it is not a "flavour of the month" and that it will take a long time to implement fully.

But in the meantime, she and her colleagues are demonstrating that they mean business by reinforcing rules against harassment, studying improvements to recruitment and promotion processes and spreading the message through special employee publications and training events.

While she expects there to be some who will be sceptical to the end, she stresses that the moves are not about positive discrimination

and that well-qualified male managers have nothing to fear.

And though the strong culture at the company might ostensibly make it difficult to embrace a wider cross-section of people, Ms McDermott is convinced that the HP Way produces an advantage over other companies.

Treating people fairly and with respect creates an effective platform, she says. Mr Golding adds that, though the refinement of the company's values amounts to a "fundamental change in the way we work, think and interact with each other", he is convinced this will make the organisation more competitive – essential if it is to continue to grow at the 20 per cent a year to which it has become accustomed.



**PHILIPS**  
**ECOTONE**

# Pick your team to take you to the World Cup Finals

THE INDEPENDENT

INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

The new league season is now underway and again Manchester United are the team to beat. Alex Ferguson's men are the bookmakers' favourites for the championship – but would you pick Teddy Sheringham in your team?

Chelsea can be expected to mount a strong challenge as can Arsenal, with Mark Overmars their most expensive recruit. Liverpool and Newcastle United will also have a say in the destination of the title.

Can you keep up with the changes? The Independent and Independent on Sunday supported by Philips Ecotone lightbulbs the energysavers are giving you the chance. With a budget of £40 million, can you come up with a team to top them all in the Premiership this season?

## HOW TO ENTER.

Firstly you will need to pick your team formation, of course there's your goalkeeper plus you have a choice of four formations for the others in your team.

**FORMATION A. 4-4-2**  
4 Defenders, 4 Midfielders, 2 Strikers

**FORMATION B. 4-3-3**  
4 Defenders, 3 Midfielders, 3 Strikers

**FORMATION C. 5-3-2**  
5 Defenders, 3 Midfielders, 2 Strikers

**FORMATION D. 3-5-2**  
3 Defenders, 5 Midfielders, 2 Strikers

Once you have chosen your formation and team name pick your team of 11 players and 1 manager from the list below. Players can only play in the positions that they are listed under and their total value must not go over £40 million. Having made a note of your team dial our registration hotline. Please try to use a tone telephone – one which makes tone noises when you dial, although pulse telephones can be used to register your team.



## THE ULTIMATE PRIZE

The overall winner, the manager who at the end of the season accrues more points than any other will win a trip to the 1998 World Cup in France. With a companion, they will see all the action of a quarter-final and semi-final of their choice, plus the final. In addition, the highest scoring team each month will win a pair of tickets to one of England's home internationals at Wembley.

The registration period has been extended – all applications should be in by midnight on Tuesday September 2.

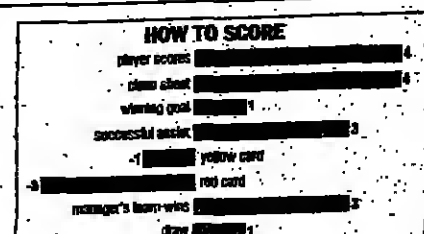
## Register today, call:

UK 0930-525-260 (tone)

UK 0930-525-259 (pulse)

Republic of Ireland: 1550 131 659

UK calls cost 50p per minute at all times.  
Republic of Ireland (toll only) calls cost 30p per minute including VAT at all times. Minimum call length 0.5 minutes.



Every time one of your players score you get four points. There are four points for a keeper or a defender every time their team keeps a clean sheet. If a player scores the winning goal, i.e. if there is a one goal difference in the scoreline, the player scoring the final goal for the winning team is awarded 1 bonus point awarded in addition to standard goal related points. Each successful Assist, a pass judged by our experts to lead directly to a goal, will give a player 3 points. The opinion of our experts on the matter is final. Each player selected and starting a game will be awarded one point.

If a player is given a Yellow Card they lose 1 point, if a player is given a Red Card they lose 3 points. Own goals, either scored or conceded, do not count.

The Premiership Manager that you choose will be awarded 3 points if their real-life team wins, 1 point is awarded if they draw and no points are given if they lose.

If you would like to know more about Philips' range of lighting products please call 0181-86 1946. Fantasy Football enquiries cannot be taken on this number.

# INDEPENDENT FANTASY FOOTBALL

CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	VALUE (£m)	CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	VALUE (£m)	CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	VALUE (£m)	CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	VALUE (£m)
GOALKEEPERS				455	Cox	Bol	2.5	560	Lundekvam	Sou	1.2	679	Sharpe	Lee	3.5
300	Seaman	Ars	4.0	456	Elliot	Bol	3.0	563	Scales	Tot	3.4	680	Ribeiro	Lee	1.5
303	Lukic	Ars	1.0	457	Fairclough	Bol	2.0	564	Campbell	Tot	4.0	683	Haaland	Lee	2.5
304	Manninger	Ars	3.0	458	Taggart	Bol	2.5	565	Calderwood	Tot	2.9	684	Parker	Lei	2.5
305	Bosnich	AV	4.0	459	Bergsson	Bol	1.5	566	Austin	Tot	2.2	685	Taylor	Lei	1.6
306	Oakes	AV	1.5	460	Duberry	Che	3.0	567	Edinburgh	Tot	1.6	686	Izzett	Lei	2.1
307	Watson	Bar	1.0	463	Petrescu	Che	3.0	568	Carr	Tot	1.2	687	Lennon	Lei	3.2
308	Lesse	Bar	1.0	464	Lambourde	Che	3.0	569	Mabbutt	Tot	1.5	688	Guppy	Lei	1.7
309	Flowers	Bla	5.2	465	Leboeuf	Che	5.0	570	Dicks	WH	3.5	689	Barnes	Liv	3.0
310	Filan	Bla	1.5	466	Sinclair	Che	2.5	573	Rieper	WH	2.7	690	Redknapp	Liv	5.2
333	Brannagan	Bol	1.2	467	Daish	Cov	2.7	574	Hall	WH	3.0	693	McManaman	Liv	5.9
334	De Goeij	Che	1.0	468	Shaw	Cov	2.2	575	Potts	WH	1.5	694	Thomas	Liv	3.0
335	Grodas	Che	1.0	469	Burrows	Cov	2.2	576	Ferdinand	WH	2.5	695	Leonhardsen	Liv	4.0
336	Ogrizovic	Cov	2.2	470	Haworth	Cov	1.5	577	Impey	WH	2.2	696	Giggs	Man	7.4
337	Hedman	Cov	1.0	473	Edworthy	CP	1.5	578	Turner	WH	2.0	697	Beckham	Man	7.0
338	Nash	CP	1.0	474	Gordon	CP	2.0	579	Perry	Wim	4.0	698	Keane	Man	7.0
339	Day	CP	1.0	475	Muscat	CP	1.0	580	Cunningham	Wim	1.5	699	Butt	Man	7.0
340	Poom	Der	1.2	476	Tuttle	CP	2.0	583	Thatcher	Wim	2.0	700	Poborski	Man	3.5
343	Hoult	Der	1.6	477	Linighan	CP	2.0	584	McAllister	Wim	1.5	703	Lee	New	3.6
344	Southall	Eve	3.0	478	Roberts	CP	3.0	585	Kimble	Wim	1.5	704	Baity	New	3.8
345	Gerrard	Eve	1.5	479	Hreidresson	CP	1.0	MIDFIELD				705	Gillespie	New	2.5
346	Martyn	Lee	3.3	480	Stimac	Der	3.3	600	Platt	Ars	2.5	706	Beardsley	New	2.0
347	Beeney	Lee	1.2	483	C. Powell	Der	1.8	603	Parlour	Ars	2.4	707	Ketshara	New	2.0
348	Keller	Lei	2.5	484	Laursen	Der	1.5	605	Vieira	Ars	4.5	708	Blinker	SW	2.5
349	Poole	Lei	1.5	485	Erasmus	Der	2.5	606	Overmars	Ars	6.0	709	Hyde	SW	1.8
350	James	Liv	3.5	486	Phelan	Eve	1.9	607	M. Rodriguez	Ars	2.0	730	Whittingham	SW	1.7
353	Warner	Liv	1.0	487	Short	Eve	3.0	608	Taylor	AV	1.9	733	Carbone	SW	3.0
354	Schmeichel	Man	5.5	488	Watson	Eve	2.7	609	Townsend	AV	3.2	734	Magilton	Sou	2.4
355	Van Der Gouw	Man	1.2	489	Unsworth	Eve	3.0	630	Draper	AV	4.1	735	Slater	Sou	1.5
356	Given	New	2.5	490	Hinchcliffe	Eve	3.5	632	Marcelle	Bar	2.0	736	Oakley	Sou	1.2
357	Hislop	New	2.5	493	Bilic	Lee	4.0	634	Bullock	Bar	1.2	737	Anderson	Tot	6.0
358	Pressman	SW	3.0	494	Kelly	Lee	3.6	635	Redfern	Bar	1.5	738	Fox	Tot	3.5
359	Taylor	Sou	1.8	495	Wetherall	Lee	2.5	636	Eaden	Bar	1.2	739	Howells	Tot	3.2
360	Beasant	Sou	1.0	496	Molenaar	Lee	2.5	637	Tinkler	Bar	1.0	740	Ginola	Tot	3.5
363	Walker	Tot	3.4	497	Dorigo	Lee	1.2	638	Donis	Bla	3.0	743	Sinton	Tot	3.0
364	Bardsen	Tot	1.0	498	Robertson	Lee	2.5	639	Wilcox	Bla	3.0	744	Nielsen	Tot	2.5
365	Miklosko	WH	1.5	499	Walsh	Lei	2.2	640	McKinlay	Bla	2.2	745	Williamson	WH	2.0
366	Sullivan	Wim	2.7	500	Whitlow	Lei	1.2	643	Sherwood	Bla	3.4	746	Hughes	WH	2.0
DEFENDERS				503	Elliot	Lei	1.2	644	Filitcraft	Bla	3.0	747	Moncur	WH	2.5
400	Dixon	Ars	2.5	504	Watts	Lei	1.6	645	Lomas	WH	1.5	748	Bishop	WH	2.5
403	Upson	Ars	2.0	505	Wright	Liv	3.0	646	Thompson	Bol	2.8	749	Berkovic	WH	2.5
404	Petit	Ars	4.2	506	Ruddock	Liv	3.0	647	Pollock	Bol	1.2	750	Lomas	WH	3.0
405	Grimendi	Ars	2.7	507	Harkness	Liv	1.2	648	Sellers	Bol	1.5	753	Jones	Wim	2.8
406	Winterburn	Ars	2.5	508	Kvarme	Liv	2.5	649	Gullitt	Che	4.4	754	Earle	Wim	3.1
407	Bould	Ars	2.5	509	Bjornebye	Liv	2.5	650	Di Matteo	Che	5.0	756	Ardley	Wim	2.0
408	Adams	Ars	4.5	530	Matteo	Liv	3.0	653	Wise	Che	3.7	757	Fear	Wim	2.0
409	Keown	Ars	4.5	533	McAteer	Liv	3.7	654	Newton	Che	2.4	STRIKERS			
430	Staunton	AV	3.0	534	G Neville	Man	4.2	655	P Hughes	Che	1.0	800	Bergkamp	Ars	7.5
433	Southgate	AV	5.2	535	P Neville	Man	4.2	656	Babycaro	Che	3.0	803	Wright	Ars	7.2
434	Ehiogu	AV	3.0	536	Irwin	Man	2.5	657	Telfer	Cov	1.8	804	Boamorte Per	AV	2.0
435	Nelson	AV	1.2	537	Pallister	Man	3.0	658	Richardson	Cov	2.4	805	Yorke	Ars	6.7
436	Wright	AV	3.0	538	May	Man	3.5	659	McAllister	Cov	3.0	806	Joachim	AV	2.4
437	Scimeca	AV	2.2	539	Johnsen	Man	3.5	660	Salako	Cov	2.4	807	Collinsmore	AV	8.1
438	Grayson	AV	2.2	540	Silva	Man	4.1	663	Johansen	Cov	2.0	808	Wilkinson	Bar	1.2
439	Moses	Bar	2.0	543	Albert	New	3.7	664	Simpson	Der	1.2	809	Hendrie	Bar	1.5
440	Appleby	Bar	1.0	544	Howey	New	3.0	665	Asanovic	Der	3.0	830	Hristov	Bar	1.5
443	Thompson	Bar	1.0	545	Peacock	New	3.3	666	D. Powell	Der	1.2	833	Sutton	Bla	4.5
444	Krizan	Bla	3.4	546	Barton	New	3.0	667	Van Der Luan	Der	1.6	834	Gallagher	Bla	3.0
445	Berg	Bla	3.4	547	Beresford	New	2.2	668	Dailly	Der	1.2	835	Dahlin	Bla	4.0
446	Le Saux	Bla	5.0	548	Blondeau	SW	2.2	669	Hunt	Der	2.0	836	McGinlay	Bol	2.2
447	Coleman	Bla	3.0	549	Nolan	SW	1.9	670	Parkinson	Eve	1.8	837	Grant	Bol	2.7
448	Hendry	Bla	4.4	550	Atherton	SW	1.9	673	Farrelly	Eve	2.0	838	Zola	Che	9.0
449	Kenna	Bla	1.9	553	Walker	SW	2.5	674	Stuart	Eve	2.5	839	Vialli	Che	3.5
448	Hendry	Bla	4.4	554	Siefanovic	SW	1.6	675	Speed	Eve	2.7	840	M. Hughes	Che	4.4
449	Kenna	Bla	1.9	555	Newsome	Sou	1.5	676	Speed	Eve	2.7	843	Tore Andre Flo	Che	3.0
450	Henchoz	Bla	2.0	556	Monkou	Sou	1.7	677	Bowyer	Lee	3.0	844	Dublin	Cov	3.5
453	Valery	Bla	3.0	557	Dodd	Sou	2.5	678	Wallace	Lee	1.8	MANAGERS			
453	Valery	Bla	3.0	558	Benali	Sou	1.5					900	Wenger	Ars	7.5
453	Valery	Bla	3.0	559	Van Ginkel	Sou	1.5					903	Little	AV	5.0
453	Valery	Bla	3.0	560	Wendie	Sou	1.5					904	Wilson	Bar	2.0
453	Valery	Bla	3.0	561	Wendie	Sou	1.5					905	Hodgson	Bla	5.0
453	Valery	Bla	3.0	562	Wendie	Sou	1.5					906	Todd	Bla	2.5
453	Valery	Bla	3.0	563	Wendie	Sou	1.5					907	Gullitt	Che	4.5
453	Valery	Bla	3.0	564	Wendie	Sou	1.5					908	Strachan	Cov	3.0
453	Valery	Bla	3.0	565	Wendie	Sou	1.5					909	Coppell	CP	2.0
453	Valery	Bla	3.0	566	Wendie	Sou	1.5					930	Smith	Der	2.0
453	Valery	Bla	3.0	567	Wendie	Sou	1.5					933	Kendall	Eve	2.5
453	Valery	Bla	3.0	568	Wendie	Sou	1.5					934	Graham	Der	2.0
453	Valery	Bla	3.0	569	Wendie	Sou	1.5					935	O'Neill	Lei	3.5
453	Valery	Bla	3.0	570	Wendie	Sou	1.5					936	Evans	Liv	4.5
453	Valery	Bla	3.0	571	Wendie	Sou	1.5					937	Ferguson	Man	7.0
453	Valery	Bla	3.0	572	Wendie	Sou	1.5					938	Dalglish	New	7.0
453	Valery	Bla	3.0	573	Wendie	Sou	1.5					939	Pleai	SW	4.0
453	Valery	Bla	3.0	574	Wendie	Sou	1.5					940	Jones	Sou	2.5
453	Valery	Bla	3.0	575	Wendie	Sou	1.5					943	Francis	Tot	4.5
453	Valery	Bla	3.0	576	Wendie	Sou	1.5					944	Redknapp	WH	3.3
453	Valery	Bla	3.0	577	Wendie	Sou	1.5					945	Kinnear	Wim	4.5







## sport

## Taylor's matadors put England to the sword

"What is wrong with English cricket? Why are the Australians so vastly superior to us?" These are perennial questions it seems, for the reason they appear in quotation marks, is that they come from a chapter in a book by Bill O'Reilly, called *Cricket Conquest*, a journal about the 1948 Ashes tour.

In that summer, England lost 4-0 to what is now regarded as probably the greatest Australian side to tour. In assessing the question, O'Reilly, the Shane Warne of his day, felt that there were few times that England seemed to have a "Bolton's chance" of winning a Test match.

Fifty years on, and little has changed, for England could quite have easily lost this series 4-1 as opposed to 3-2. More revealing than the scoreline however, is that all three of Australia's victories came in a row and were won by country miles; games in which England performed as meekly as choirboys in a frontier tavern.

Although undeniably capable of intermittent brilliance, it is rignur and imagination that England mostly lack, and not only among the players. As Australia announce bold plans to select separate Test and one-day sides for the future, as well as

We have our moments and win the odd Test but, reflects Derek Pringle, it is Australia who always rise to the occasion

provide better pay for its players, England's policy makers are still squabbling around a table playing footsie.

Held back, distracted by the petty self-interest of their second masters, the county clubs, confusion reigns, and the players reflect this in their cricket.

Arriving faded after their series against South Africa, and distracted by rumblings over the suitability of their captain, they looked ripe for the taking. So ripe, that when they lost both the one-day series and the first Test, the worry lines began to appear.

But, although consummately outplayed by England, something vital occurred in Birmingham: Mark Taylor scored a battling hundred. In a single stroke, and the speculation regarding the captaincy, had been removed and from that moment on they were a side united in a collective cause to win the Ashes.

Of course it is hard to have matchwinners. But while England have their quality players they do not seem to share their counterparts' sense of occasion.

Whenever the "big ask" was required, thoroughbreds like Steve Waugh, Glenn McGrath, Warne and Ian Healy nearly always deliver. Like skilled matadors, they know exactly where and when to wound an opponent.

In cold figures alone, Graham Thorpe and Nasser Hussain scored more runs than Steve Waugh. The difference however, is that Waugh produced the bulk of his when his side most needed them, and his two centuries at Old Trafford, which got Australia back into the series, must rate amongst the finest ever played on covered pitches.

Had Waugh not delivered, England, in all likelihood, would have been two up with three to play. A position, which if not exactly deserved, would probably not have been squandered.

Although the inclement weather helped to disguise the matter, England had decided to play this series—at least until the dustbowl at The Oval—on slow grassy pitches.

To some this was pure folly. To others it was a risk worth taking, and one that until McGrath began hitting the right length and

Paul Reiffel was whistled up from his sofa in Melbourne, had had its moments.

What those behind the scheme failed to realise though, was how it would affect some of England's key batsmen, and both Thorpe and Alec Stewart lost confidence.

Recovering his form, Thorpe ended the series as England's leading run-scorer with 453 runs. However, between his century in the first Test at Edgbaston and the flat pitch for the fifth at Trent Bridge, he contributed just 91 runs in six innings.

Thorpe was not alone and in six Tests, there were only five occasions when England batsmen passed 50 in the first innings, which is where Test matches are usually controlled and won.

But was this a weakness in just the batting, or were the bowlers also allowing the opposition the luxury of too many four balls? Quite probably it was a combination of both and in a six-match series where England's highest total was 478 for 9, Australia managed five scores higher than the 313, that was England's next best.

And yet England's bowlers, appeared to remain far more competitive than their batting counterparts. Providing injury does not blight them, the pacetrio of Andy Caddick, Darren Gough and Dean Headley all had enough moments to bode well for the immediate future.

They were however, not in the same class as McGrath (36 wickets) and Warne (24 wickets), who with their sustained accuracy, are able to build pressure until it reaches intolerable proportions. Something Atherton—McGrath's victim seven times in the series—found to his cost.

Between them, the pair provide both the first line of attack as well as the back line of defence, while anything in between, was mopped up by Gillespie, Kasproutz and Reiffel. This is where the real difference lay and where it has lain ever since 1948.

As O'Reilly concluded even then: "The lot of an English professional bowler, chosen for England, is not a rosy one. He not only has to bowl in the more important matches for his country, but is expected to turn out the next day if need be, to do the back work for his country." We can hardly claim we were weren't warned.

England v Australia Ashes series final									
ENGLAND					AUSTRALIA				
Wicket	Runs	Wicket	Runs	Wicket	Wicket	Runs	Wicket	Runs	Wicket
1	11	1	11	1	1	11	1	11	1
2	11	2	11	2	2	11	2	11	2
3	11	3	11	3	3	11	3	11	3
4	11	4	11	4	4	11	4	11	4
5	11	5	11	5	5	11	5	11	5
6	11	6	11	6	6	11	6	11	6
7	11	7	11	7	7	11	7	11	7
8	11	8	11	8	8	11	8	11	8
9	11	9	11	9	9	11	9	11	9
10	11	10	11	10	10	11	10	11	10
11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
12	11	12	11	12	12	11	12	11	12
13	11	13	11	13	13	11	13	11	13
14	11	14	11	14	14	11	14	11	14
15	11	15	11	15	15	11	15	11	15
16	11	16	11	16	16	11	16	11	16
17	11	17	11	17	17	11	17	11	17
18	11	18	11	18	18	11	18	11	18
19	11	19	11	19	19	11	19	11	19
20	11	20	11	20	20	11	20	11	20
21	11	21	11	21	21	11	21	11	21
22	11	22	11	22	22	11	22	11	22
23	11	23	11	23	23	11	23	11	23
24	11	24	11	24	24	11	24	11	24
25	11	25	11	25	25	11	25	11	25
26	11	26	11	26	26	11	26	11	26
27	11	27	11	27	27	11	27	11	27
28	11	28	11	28	28	11	28	11	28
29	11	29	11	29	29	11	29	11	29
30	11	30	11	30	30	11	30	11	30
31	11	31	11	31	31	11	31	11	31
32	11	32	11	32	32	11	32	11	32
33	11	33	11	33	33	11	33	11	33
34	11	34	11	34	34	11	34	11	34
35	11	35	11	35	35	11	35	11	35
36	11	36	11	36	36	11	36	11	36
37	11	37	11	37	37	11	37	11	37
38	11	38	11	38	38	11	38	11	38
39	11	39	11	39	39	11	39	11	39
40	11	40	11	40	40	11	40	11	40
41	11	41	11	41	41	11	41	11	41
42	11	42	11	42	42	11	42	11	42
43	11	43	11	43	43	11	43	11	43
44	11	44	11	44	44	11	44	11	44
45	11	45	11	45	45	11	45	11	45
46	11	46	11	46	46	11	46	11	46
47	11	47	11	47	47	11	47	11	47
48	11	48	11	48	48	11	48	11	48
49	11	49	11	49	49	11	49	11	49
50	11	50	11	50	50	11	50	11	50
51	11	51	11	51	51	11	51	11	51
52	11	52	11	52	52	11	52	11	52
53	11	53	11	53	53	11	53	11	53
54	11	54	11	54	54	11	54	11	54
55	11	55	11	55	55	11	55	11	55
56	11	56	11	56	56	11	56	11	56
57	11	57	11	57	57	11	57	11	57
58	11	58	11	58	58	11	58	11	58
59	11	59	11	59	59	11	59	11	59
60	11	60	11	60	60	11	60	11	60
61	11	61	11	61	61	11	61	11	61
62	11	62	11	62	62	11	62	11	62
63	11	63	11	63	63	11	63	11	63
64	11	64	11	64	64	11	64	11	64
65	11	65	11	65	65	11	65	11	65
66	11	66	11	66	66	11	66	11	66
67	11	67	11	67	67	11	67	11	67
68	11	68	11	68	68	11	68	11	68
69	11	69	11	69	69	11	69	11	69
70	11	70	11	70	70	11	70	11	70
71	11	71	11	71	71	11	71	11	71
72	11	72	11	72	72	11	72	11	72
73	11	73	11	73	73	11	73	11	73
74	11	74	11	74	74	11	74	11	74
75	11	75	11	75	75	11	75	11	75
76	11	76	11	76	76	11	76	11	76
77	11	77	11	77	77	11	77	11	77
78	11	78	11	78	78	11	78	11	78
79	11	79	11	79	79	11	79	11	79
80	11	80	11	80	80	11	80	11	80
81	11	81	11	81	81	11	81	11	81
82	11	82	11	82	82	11	82	11	82
83	11	83	11	83	83	11	83	11	83
84	11	84	11	84	84	11	84	11	84
85	11	85	11	85	85	11	85	11	85
86	11	86	11	86	86	11	86	11	86
87	11	87	11	87	87	11	87	11	87
88	11	88	11	88	88	11	88	11	88
89	11	89	11	89	89	11	89	11	89
90	11	90	11	90	90	11	90	11	90
91	11	91	11	91	91	11	91	11	91
92	11	92	11	92	92	11	92	11	92
93	11	93	11	93	93	11	93	11	93
94	11	94	11	94	94	11	94	11	94
95	11	95	11	95	95	11	95	11	95
96	11	96	11	96	96	11	96	11	96
97	11	97	11	97	97	11	97	11	97
98	11	98	11	98	98	11	98	11	98
99	11	99	11	99	99	11	99	11	99
100	11	100	11	100	100	11	100	11	100



Running water: The men's 200m heats in Birmingham yesterday. In the final, Coventry's Marion Devonshire, a late entry, won with a personal best of 20.85 seconds

Photograph: Peter Jay

## Cash-stricken BAF asks amateurs to save jobs

To judge by the low key event it staged with such ostentatious at the Alexander Stadium yesterday and the day before, the Amateur Athletic Association is a body of waning power.

Appearances can be deceptive. Despite splitting its championships from the British Athletic Federation trials this year in acrimonious circumstances, the AAA of England now finds itself in a position to name its own terms, because it has something the sport's umbrella body is in desperate need of: money.

The BAF, which lost half a million pounds last year, has reached financial crisis. It is reported that a loan of £500,000 is due to be repaid by the end of the month; now BAF has appealed to its bitter rival to bail it out until the £1.4m of Lottery money it has been promised has been freed by the Sports Council.

"We can't let these championships die, and we can't let BAF die," Geoff Clarke, the AAA treasurer, said.

Clarke would not be drawn on what conditions the AAA—which has reserves approaching £2m—might exact when their management committee meets on Saturday to sanction an offer of financial support. But other sources suggest the AAA's price would be the continuation of a separate championship—distinct from the main BAF trials—and permission to negotiate its own television rights.

Thus the fault line which currently runs through the sport will stretch on into the future. Next year, the AAA will hold its own England trials for the Commonwealth Games just three weeks before the BAF trials to select Britain's European Championship team.

According to a BAF

Mike Rowbottom reports from Birmingham on the desperate plight of Britain's national athletics federation

spokesperson, the AAA have been asked to save the jobs of a number of development officers and all five national coaches. Without immediate assistance, Richard Leese, Bruce Longdon, Carl Johnson, Peter Warden, and Richard Simmons would all face redundancy next month. The AAA have also been asked to underwrite administration costs.

The departure of Peter Radford as the BAF's executive chairman has done something to ease relations between the two bodies, but Clarke was scathing yesterday about BAF's financial management.

In 1991, the AAA—which, apart from times of war, has staged its own championships

every year since 1880—had reserves of £2.5m. When BAF was set up in 1993, it took half of that amount, and 50 per cent of any subsequent surplus.

"BAF spent half a million on leasing its headquarters, Clarke said. "Other than that, they have lived beyond their means."

He criticised the payment of large salaries, such as the £70,000 per annum that Radford received, and extra expenditure on forward planning.

"The crunch has finally come, he added. "England has no alternative but to save British athletics. Nobody is prepared to say they have made a balls-up. But they have."

"It was suddenly dropped on us out of the blue. But we are not so bitter or so twisted that

we won't help."

The AAA also maintains it has no alternative but to hold the Commonwealth trials in the first week of July. The Commonwealth Games Council for England needs early selections in order to organise attendance at a pre-Games holding camp being set up in Penang, near Kuala Lumpur.

BAF needs to hold its trials at the end of July, before the European Championships start in Budapest on 15 August.

Holding two trials within three weeks of each other is something which is bound to cause widespread dismay in the sport.

"It's a deadly," said the national sprint coach, Richard Simmons, who will join the British Olympic Association

this autumn. "It would be crazy to have two trials so close together. It is forcing athletes to decide between the Europeans and the Commonwealths. The athletes should come first, and not be disadvantaged by having to fit into someone's timetable."

The timing of these Championships—which received 11th hour support from View From—could hardly have been worse, coming as they did at the tail end of the season and clashing with Sunday's UK Women's League matches, the World Student Games and BAF team visits to Switzerland and Germany.

A gathering of little more than a thousand purists witnessed a meeting which must have been a sweet reminder to some of the old AAA guard present of how things used to be before the days of appearance fees and shoe contracts.

The view from the stand was

less than captivating. Few top ranking athletes were present, and those who were—such as Angie Thorp, Judy Oakes—who earned a record 15th AAA title—and Robert Weir encountered little opposition.

Steve Halls and Cathy Beeson, who have attended every AAA Championships for the last 10 years, were less than impressed. "Even we are struggling with some of the names today," said Halls.

Ian Cross, who had brought his wife and three daughters from Northampton to watch, said he was disappointed at the way the championships had been split from the trials.

"It makes it very difficult for people who







